

The Acceptance of Copernican Theory Before Galileo

A presentation at the 127th AAPT National Meeting, Madison WI, Aug 6, 2003

John Zwart, Professor of Physics
Dordt College Sioux Center, IA 51250
zwart@dordt.edu

I. Introduction

- A. Why Bother?
- B. Time Frame
- C. Brief review of Copernican vs Aristotelian/ Ptolemaic systems

II. Comparison of the Theories

- A. Mathematical/Aesthetic Considerations
- B. Religious/Philosophical

III. Some Key players

- A. Luther and Calvin - two quotes
- B. Rheticus
- C. Osiander
- D. Melanchthon

IV. Conclusions

References

- Owen Gingerich *The Eye of Heaven: Ptolemy, Copernicus, Kepler* (American Institute of Physics, New York, 1993).
- Nicolas Jardine *The birth of history and philosophy of science: Kepler's 'A defence of Tycho against Ursus,' with essays on its provenance and significance* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1984).
- Donald H. Kobe, "Copernicus and Martin Luther: An encounter between science and religion," *Am. J. Phys.* **66** (3), 190-196 (1998).
- Douglas R. Martin, "Status of the Copernican theory before Kepler, Galileo, and Newton," *Am. J. Phys.* **52** (11), 982-986 (1984).
- Edward Rosen, "Calvin's Attitude Toward Copernicus," *Journal of the History of Ideas* **21** (3), 431-441 (1960).
- Richard Stauffer "Calvin et Copernic," *Revue de l'Historie des Religions* **179**, 31-40, (1971).
- Robert S. Westman "The Copernicans and the Churches," chapter 3 of David C. Lindberg and Ronald L. Numbers, editors *God and Nature: Historical Essays on the Encounter Between Christianity and Science* (University of California Press, Berkeley, 1986).
- Robert S. Westman "The Melanchthon Circle, Rheticus and the Wittenberg Interpretation of the Copernican Theory" *Isis* **66** (2), pp. 164-193 (1975).
- John W. Zwart "Between Copernicus and Galileo: Science, Religion, and John Calvin" paper submitted to *Am. J. Phys.* (2003)