

## EDITORIAL

*The book De revolutionibus orbium coelestium, in which Copernicus presents the thesis that “the Earth moves, whereas the Sun is at rest in the center of the Universe”, belongs to that small group of scientific works which, despite addressing a particular scientific field, had universal reach.*

*Copernicus’ work is still much debated. For a long time he was considered the person who had not only radically changed astronomy, but who also initiated the transformation of science in general. More detailed analyses of his work revealed that, epistemologically speaking, his “conceptual universe” is still predominantly traditional and that, aside from decentering the Earth and setting it in motion, it does not present anything radically new. Is Copernicus then a conservative or a revolutionary? This is only one of the “disputed questions” that concern Copernicus’ work and his role in the scientific revolution (provided, of course, that we accept the presumption that the scientific revolution did indeed take place). There are, however, numerous other issues at stake here, such as: what is his relation to traditional astronomy, in particular to Islamic astronomy; what was the effect or influence of his work on the first “Copernicans”, to mention just two such questions. But Copernicus left his trace on other areas of human thought too. In philosophy, one can follow the metaphor of “the Copernican turn” from Kant and Nietzsche all the way to postmodern philosophers. At issue here is the relation of various modern “returns to Kant” and of demands for “the second Copernican turn” in philosophy to Copernicus and his heritage. Last but not least, we can ask ourselves if perhaps modern science is on the threshold of a new “Copernican revolution”.*

*I would like to express my warm thanks to all those who shed some light on these issues with their excellent and insightful contributions.*

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