



Star Struck: One Thousand Years of the Art and Science of Astronomy

Ronald Brashear, Daniel Lewis

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The night sky has always fascinated artists and scientists, awed by its beauty and perplexed by its meaning. This volume illustrates some of the rarest and most beautiful books in the history of astronomy, drawn from the Huntington Library's collections and supplemented with Hubble Telescope deep field images supplied by NASA and with illuminated manuscripts from the J. Paul Getty Museum. The history of astronomy is marked with observations that failed to conform to philosophical beliefs and with the social, political, and spiritual collisions these inconsistencies brought. The ancient Greeks knew the Earth must dominate the universe, but their observations of irregular planetary movements did not easily confirm their conviction. Nicholas Copernicus, an official of the Catholic Church in Poland, articulated a theory of a heliocentric universe-but he did so cautiously, publishing his work in the year he died in 1543. More than a half-century later, Galileo looked at the Moon through one of the earliest telescopes and used this new perspective to defend the Copernican model, for which he spent the last decade of his life in prison. The copy of Copernicus's "De Revolutionibus" now in the Huntington's collections was once owned by Edwin Hubble, who made extraordinary discoveries 75 years ago while perusing the night skies from California's Mount Wilson Observatory.

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