



# Pythagoras, Bruno, Galileo: The Pagan Heresies of the Copernicans

*Alberto A. Martinez*

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In 1616, the Inquisition denounced "the false Pythagorean doctrine" that the Earth moves around the Sun. Cardinal Bellarmino admonished Galileo to abandon that doctrine. Galileo had attributed it to Pythagoras, and he had found evidence "to revive the old opinion of Pythagoras that the Moon is another Earth." Even the planets seemed to be other worlds. But Galileo did not realize that he was connecting the theory of Earth's motion with offensive pagan beliefs. For more than a thousand years, famous theologians and saints had denounced the Pythagoreans for heresies and blasphemies. This book traces the growth of controversial beliefs about cosmology. This is the only account that sets the Copernican Revolution in that neglected context, tracing the thread of Pythagorean beliefs in the works of Copernicus and his most famous followers: Bruno, Gilbert, Kepler, Galilei, and Campanella. It shows, surprisingly, that the Inquisition's prolonged and deadly proceedings against Giordano Bruno were caused essentially by Bruno's obstinate allegiance to Pythagorean beliefs, including the existence of many worlds and heretical beliefs about the soul of the world. Contrary to Catholic beliefs, the Copernicans claimed that the Earth moves because it has a soul. Using a wealth of new sources, Martinez shows that such concerns greatly affected also the Inquisition's proceedings against Galileo. The book includes the discovery of Cardinal Bellarmino's critiques of Giordano Bruno's heretical ideas; plus, the revealing condemnation of such ideas also in the writings of Bellarmino's allies. Most importantly, Martinez presents the very first analysis of an unpublished, utterly neglected but extremely revealing document: a 210-page rare manuscript by Galileo's most critical judge in his trial of 1633, actually explaining why the Inquisition condemned the Copernicans, the sect of new "Pythagoreans." The book relies on rich and meticulous documentation from rare primary sources and new translations. It rescues neglected aspects of history that are more dramatic than historical myths. It shows how the Christians criticized Pythagorean beliefs about demons, hell, the Earth, immortality, the transmigration of souls, magic, and divination. And it reveals the important and utterly neglected continuity between Bruno's deadly trial and the Inquisition's proceedings against Galileo.

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