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Rienk Vermij, *The Calvinist Copernicans: The Reception of the New Astronomy in the Dutch Republic, 1575–1750* (Amsterdam: Koninklijke Nederlandse Akademie van Wetenschappen 2002) [History of Science and Scholarship in the Netherlands 1]. X + 433 pp., ISBN 9069843404. €49,00.

Scholarship in the history of science has come a long way since Dorothy Stimson's *Gradual Acceptance of the Copernican Theory of the Universe* (1917), and even, it now seems, since *The Reception of Copernicus' Heliocentric Theory*, edited by Jerzy Dobrzycki (1972). In this excellent book Rienk Vermij superbly fulfils his ambition to detail 'how and why' Copernicanism became 'a received and established scientific theory' in the context of the Dutch Republic (p. 1). The author does not simply allow the big names in the field to represent the whole, however. One of the book's great strengths is the seemingly comprehensive coverage which the author presents to the reader. The big names are all here of course, from Simon Stevin and Isaac Beeckman to Christiaan Huygens; but the book also includes fascinating and revealing accounts of highly obscure thinkers, such as the miller, Balthasar van der Veen (p. 118; likened here to Menocchio, the heretical miller made famous by Carlo Ginzburg), and the Friesian farmhand, Tjerk Jansz de Boer (pp. 360-1). Moreover, all of these characters appear (many of them more than once, of course) in the various contexts which the author discerns as important for the history he presents (the transition from mathematical to physical theory in astronomy, for example, from humanism to Newtonianism in natural philosophy, and from Voetianism to Cocceianism in religion).

The overall result is inspirational, making this reader, at least, wish that similar studies of the other European nations will follow. On the showing of this volume, however, it seems reasonable to doubt that comparable studies would be quite as rich and insightful as this one. As the author points out in his introduction, although the Dutch Republic was small, throughout this period it was highly prominent on the European stage. And such are the complexities of the Dutch context that it is impossible to tell the story of the uptake of Copernicanism without delving deeply into the historical impact of Cartesianism, both within and outside the universities, and into historical developments within the Dutch Reformed Church. There are no clear parallels with these historical phenomena in England, for example. Although Copernicanism might figure in accounts of the development of the so-called 'experimental philosophy', and even in developments in the institutions of religion in England, it would not be seen, as Vermij shows it to be in the Dutch case, as a major driving force.

This book appeared in the same year as Owen Gingerich's *Annotated Census of Copernicus' De Revolutionibus* (Leiden, 2002), and so Professor Vermij was not alerted in time to what could be learned about the transmission of Copernicanism from studying the marginalia in individual copies of the *De revolutionibus*. Otherwise, the author's coverage of his subject seems so comprehensive that I hardly know what to make of the almost complete absence of astrology from his account. On the face of it, it looks as though Professor Vermij's examination of Copernican writers is so total and so detailed that his silence about astrology must reflect an absence of astrological concerns among Dutch thinkers. It would be more reassuring, however, if he had actually confirmed this explicitly. Although it is often acknowledged by historians of early modern science that astronomy and astrology were inseparable at this time, there is a strong tendency among historians, having said this, to proceed as if they were essentially separate and to focus exclusively on astronomy (Westman is a

notable exception). Even given the author's seemingly complete blanket coverage, it seems hard to be sure that he has not also turned a blind eye to astrological concerns in the pre-Cartesian part of his story, and perhaps anti-astrological sentiments in his discussion of religious opposition. The discussion of the author of *Progymnasmatum astronomiae restitutae* (1619), Philips Lansbergen (Chapter 5), reveals him to be interested in Hermeticism and other occult ideas and to have a profound belief in the harmony and meaningfulness of the heavens, but this does not seem to be accompanied, in Vermij's account anyway, by any interest in astrology.

Nonetheless, this is a rich and fascinating history of the acceptance of the Copernican theory, and much more besides. It provides a highly useful history of the Dutch Republic and the Dutch Reformed Church for those who are unfamiliar with them, and adds significantly to our knowledge of many Dutch mathematicians and philosophers, and to the fortunes of Cartesianism and Newtonianism in the Netherlands, not just among the learned elite, but even in the wider society. It also provides a highly important contribution to our understanding of the relations between science and religion in the period. All in all, this is a work that should be essential reading for historians of early modern science.

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