

[PDF] On The Shoulders Of Giants

Albert Einstein, Isaac Newton, Stephen Hawking, Nicolaus Copernicus, Johannes Kepler, Galileo Galilei - pdf download free book



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Description:

From Publishers Weekly Acclaimed physicist Hawking has collected in this single illuminating volume the classic works of physics and astronomy that in their day revolutionized humankind's perception of the world. Included are Copernicus's *On the Revolution of Heavenly Spheres*, Galileo's *Dialogues Concerning Two New Sciences*, Kepler's "Harmony of the World," Newton's *The Principia* and selections from *The Principle of Relativity* by Einstein. Taken together, these writings document

the evolution of our conception of the universe from a pre-Copernican cosmos with a stationary earth at its center to one in which the very weave of time and space are relative. The editor's ability to step back and view the sweep of his subject was first showcased in his bestselling *A Brief History of Time* and confirmed in his *The Universe in a Nutshell*. In an essay introducing each work here, he gives a short and sweet biography of its author and an explanation of its significance, as well as the occasional gem, like Galileo's handwritten renunciation of his beliefs before the Inquisition. To read the works themselves is to feel the thrill and mystery of intimacy with oft-cited source documents. Despite the volume's heftiness, Hawking has given these works a setting that is elegantly simple and, in its simplicity, effectively broadening.

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From In translation from the original Latin, Italian, or German, the revolutionary scientific writings of Copernicus, Kepler, Galileo, Newton, and Einstein are here gathered into one monumental book. The texts appear to be unexpurgated, with little evidence of editing; Hawking's contribution is a biographical introduction to each of these icons of physics. The actual texts are largely unmediated by Hawking, so readers seriously willing to plunge into *De revolutionibus* or *Principia mathematica* would be well advised to be self-reliant, particularly in the mathematics absolutely central to understanding when reading the texts. This collection could be regarded as an intellectual fashion accessory for readers without the requisite mathematical ability, although some of the entries are more accessible, as with the Galileo offering, which Galileo wrote as a dialogue precisely for a general audience. In the Einstein selections, too, the math-impaired can find the Newton-toppling ideas among the equations: "Velocities greater than light . . . have no possibility of existence." It remains to be seen whether the publisher's audacious six-figure press run is justified. *Gilbert Taylor*
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