



The Birth of a New Physics (Revised and Updated)

By I. Bernard Cohen

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The Birth of a New Physics (Revised and Updated) By I. Bernard Cohen

The earth circles the sun every year and rotates on its axis every twenty-four hours. The earth does not stand still.

These are notions so basic to our view of life that we take them for granted. But in the seventeenth century they were revolutionary, heretical, even dangerous to the men who formed them. Culture, religion, and science had intertwined over the centuries to create a world view based on a stationary earth. Indeed, if the earth moved, would not birds be blown off the trees and would not an object thrown straight up come down far away?

Then came the Renaissance and with it Copernicus, Galileo, Kepler, Huygens, and Newton: giants who courageously remade the world into an earth which actually moves 100,000 feet a second while revolving 1,000 miles an hour around an object 93,000,000 miles away. And yet birds perch unruffled and an apple will fall straight down.

All of this we think we know. But how well do we know it? In the twenty-five years since its first publication, *The Birth of a New Physics* has become a classic in the history of science. Here expanded by more than one-third and fully updated, it not only offers us the best account of the greatest scientific revolution but also tells us how we can *know* we live in a dynamic universe.

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The Birth of a New Physics (Revised and Updated) By I. Bernard Cohen Bibliography

- Sales Rank: #701813 in Books
- Published on: 1985-08-17
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 8.30" h x .70" w x 5.60" l, .50 pounds
- Binding: Paperback
- 258 pages



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Editorial Review

From the Back Cover

The Birth of a New Physics has been written for the general reader, for students in high schools or colleges (studying science, philosophy, or history), for historians and philosophers, and for anyone who may wish to understand the dynamic, adventurous quality of science. The author's intention is to explore one aspect of that great Scientific Revolution that occurred during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, to clarify certain fundamental aspects of the nature and development of modern science.

About the Author

I. Bernard Cohen was Victor S. Thomas Professor, Emeritus, of the History of Science at Harvard University, where he taught from 1942 to 1984. He was the first American to receive the degree of Ph.D. in the History of Science. He was the author of many books, including *Science and the Founding Fathers: Science in the Political Thought of Thomas Jefferson, Benjamin Franklin, John Adams, and James Madison*; *The Science of Benjamin Franklin*; *Revolution in Science*; *The Newtonian Revolution*; *The Birth of a New Physics*; and, with Anne Whitman, *Isaac Newton's Principia: A New Translation of Newton's Mathematical Principles of Natural Philosophy*. He edited several series of works, including *Harvard Monographs in the History of Science*, *Three Centuries of Science in America*, and the ongoing *Studies & Texts in the History of Computing*. He was a Fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, the American Association for the Advancement of Science, the Royal Astronomical Society, the British Academy, and the Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei.

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