Nicolaus Copernicus
(1473 AD - 1543 AD)

Polish scientist who proposed a heliocentric model of the universe to replace the geocentric model popularized by Ptolemy. While it was not possible to prove Copernican theory by direct observational evidence for several centuries, it was the one the most popular explanation of planetary motion.

John Dee
(1527 AD - 1608 AD)

English mathematician and astronomer. Dee drew up astrological maps, and Hermetic philosophy, he believed the universe was governed by mathematical principles.

William Gilbert
(1544 AD - 1603 AD)

English physician and natural philosopher who supported Copernicus and was highly critical of Aristotle's physics. He realized that electricity and magnetism were related but separate phenomena, summarizing his discoveries in his treatise.

Tycho Brahe
(1546 AD - 1601 AD)

Danish nobleman who built the best observatories of the time with his fortune. His instruments provided far better measurements of planetary positions and preceded Kepler with the detailed data leading to the three laws of planetary motion.

Giordano Bruno
(1548 AD - 1600 AD)

Italian philosopher and astronomer who supported the Copernican heliocentric theory and which contradicted the Church's teachings. Bruno was burned at the stake for his support of Copernicus, the infinite universe, and pantheistic views.

Galileo Galilei
(1564 AD - 1642 AD)

Italian physicist and astronomer who pioneered the Copernican heliocentric theory and which contradicted the Church's teachings. Galileo's observations of Saturn (thought to be two separate bodies) contradicted Aristotle's physics.

Johannes Kepler
(1571 AD - 1630 AD)

German mathematician and astronomer who wrote of the planets orbit in ellipses with speed that varies with distance from the sun, and that distance and period are correlated in a simple mathematical relationship.

Isaac Newton
(1643 AD - 1727 AD)

English physicist, mathematician, and astronomer whose Principia Mathematica laid the foundation for classical mechanics. Newton also invented calculus and formulated a theory of gravitation and Newton's three laws of motion. He also developed the mathematical calculus, a method of calculation.

1473 AD | 1480 AD | 1487 AD | 1490 AD | 1497 AD | 1500 AD | 1507 AD | 1510 AD | 1515 AD | 1520 AD | 1523 AD | 1530 AD | 1535 AD | 1540 AD | 1543 AD | 1550 AD | 1557 AD | 1560 AD | 1565 AD | 1570 AD | 1575 AD | 1580 AD | 1585 AD | 1590 AD | 1595 AD | 1600 AD | 1607 AD | 1610 AD | 1617 AD | 1620 AD | 1627 AD | 1630 AD | 1635 AD | 1640 AD | 1645 AD | 1650 AD | 1655 AD | 1660 AD | 1667 AD | 1670 AD | 1677 AD | 1680 AD | 1685 AD | 1690 AD | 1695 AD | 1700 AD | 1705 AD | 1710 AD | 1715 AD