leo's time. The Dogmatism of the stationary period, which identified the cause of philosophical and religious truth, had not yet distinctly felt itself attacked by the advance of physical knowledge; and therefore had not begun to look with alarm on such movements. Still, the claims of Scripture and of ecclesiastical authority were asserted as paramount on all subjects; and it was obvious that many persons would be disquieted or offended with the new interpretation of many scriptural expressions, which the true theory would make necessary. This evil Copernicus appears to have foreseen; and this and other causes long withheld him from publication. He was himself an ecclesiastic; and, by the patronage of his maternal uncle, was prebendary of the church of St. John at Thorn, and a canon of the church of Frauenburg, in the diocese of Ermeland.[6] He had been a student at Bologna, and had taught mathematics at Rome in the year 1500; and he afterwards pursued his studies and observations at his residence near the mouth of the Vistula.[7] His discovery of his system must have occurred before 1507, for in 1543 he informs Pope Paulus the Third, in his dedication, that he had kept his book by him for four times the nine years recommended by Horace, and then only published it at the earnest entreaty of his friend Cardinal Schomberg, whose letter is prefixed to the work. "Though I know," he says, "that the thoughts of a philosopher do not depend on the judgment of the many, his study being to seek out truth in all things as far as that is permitted by God to human reason: yet when I considered," he adds, "how absurd my doctrine would appear, I long hesitated whether I should publish my book, or whether it were not better to follow the example of the Pythagoreans and others, who delivered their doctrines only by tradition and to friends." It will be observed that he speaks here of the opposition of the established school of Astronomers, not of Divines. The latter, indeed, he appears to consider as a less formidable danger. "If perchance," he says at the end of his preface, "there be *ματαιολόγοι*, vain babblers, who knowing nothing of mathematics, yet assume the right of judging on account of some place of Scripture perversely wrested to their purpose, and who blame and attack my undertaking; I heed them not, and look upon their judgments as rash and contemptible." He then goes on to show that the globular figure of the earth (which was, of course, at that time, an undisputed point among astronomers), had been opposed on similar grounds by Lactantius, who,

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[6] Rheticus, *Nar.* p. 94.

[7] Riccioli.