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The Dream of Kepler: a retrospective work on the human side of the scientist

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The compendium *Epitome astronomiae copernicanae*, published between 1618 and 1621, is considered the most complete and influential work of Johannes Kepler (1571-1630), introducing the reader to the heliocentric theory and the whole astronomical work of its author. However, another much less known masterpiece exists deserving comparable attention: the *Somnium, seu opus posthumum de astronomia lunari* (published posthumously, in 1634), depicting Kepler not only as a scientist but also as a man. It is the short tale of a dream, which troubled drafting lasted for almost forty years, describing the journey to the Moon made by a fictional young man, whose life shows several affinities with Kepler's one. Within its pages and its rich apparatus of explanatory notes, added by Kepler himself, several references to the major works and the life of the astronomer can immediately be found. The *Somnium* is thus a journey through Kepler's theories, providing the reader with an accurate portrait of an exceptionally modern character (defender of both the Copernican model and the central role of science) but still tied to the past (in his Platonic and Pythagorean ideas). Thanks to the *Somnium* is possible to draw the fundamental steps in Kepler's life and in his work, surely deserving a special place in the history of astronomy.

Synthetic bibliography

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