

1. Record Nr.	UNINA9910484052403321
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Titolo	Pioneer of galactic astronomy : a biography of Jacobus C. Kapteyn // Pieter C van der Kruit
Pubbl/distr/stampa	Cham, Switzerland : , : Springer, , [2021] Â©2021
ISBN	3-030-55423-6
Edizione	[1st ed. 2021.]
Descrizione fisica	1 online resource (XXI, 305 p. 154 illus., 88 illus. in color.)
Collana	Springer Biographies, , 2365-0613
Disciplina	520.92
Soggetti	Astronomers - Netherlands
Lingua di pubblicazione	Inglese
Formato	Materiale a stampa
Livello bibliografico	Monografia
Nota di bibliografia	Includes bibliographical references and index.
Nota di contenuto	Introduction -- Boarding School and University -- Astronomy Around 1875 -- Astronomer and Professor -- Almost Half a Million Stars -- Laboratory and Statistical Astronomy -- Star Streams -- In the mean time in Groningen -- Mount Wilson -- Statistics and other matters -- First Attempt: the Kapetyn Universe -- Coda. .
Sommario/riassunto	This non-technical biography of Jacobus Cornelius Kapteyn (1851-1922) presents to the general reader the scientific life of the astronomer who pioneered the studies of the structure of the Milky Way Galaxy. In telling Kapteyn's story the author weaves in astronomy basics and uses modern astronomical images to show the developments of astronomical research from Kapteyn's times to the present. In particular the study of the distribution of stars in space has now culminated with spectacular new insights coming from the astrometric satellite GAIA, which is receiving much public attention today. The biography shows how Kapteyn's ideas influenced prominent astronomers worldwide. He is prominent as designer of the Kapteyn Universe, the alternative to the large system found by Harlow Shapley. He is the discoverer of Kapteyn's Star, still the second fastest moving star in the sky, which is now one of the nearest stars with a planet in the habitable zone. This fascinating hybrid of astronomy history and popular astronomy tells the story of the astronomy professor without an observatory who founded the first astronomical laboratory specializing in measuring photographic plates exposed elsewhere.

Kapteyn took astronomy out of cataloguing stars to measuring distances and velocities in order to study their spatial distribution, systematic motions (Kapteyn's Star Streams) and the equilibrium between their gravity and motions. His legacy includes, in addition to the first application of Galactic structure and dynamics, Jan Hendrik Oort, the famous astronomer from Leiden, who as a student was so impressed by Kapteyn's lectures that he decided to become an astronomer.

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