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Nota di contenuto	Prelude before Tsiolkovskii: Russian rocketry from Peter the Great to the nineteenth century -- Introduction envisioning the cosmos: K. E. Tsiolkovskii, Russian public culture, and the mythology of Soviet cosmonautics, 1857-1964 -- Beginnings, teaching science in a provincial context: Tsiolkovskii's years in the Russian locale, 1857-1917 -- Dreaming of the cosmos: early scientific and technical experimentation in pre-1917 Kaluga, Russia -- Getting serious about rocket flight in revolutionary Russia, 1917-1928 -- Cross-fertilizing futuristic literary genres: utopian science fiction or didactic popular technology in revolutionary Russia, 1890-1928 -- Stalin, Khrushchev, and the spaceman: technology, Soviet national identity, and the memorialization of a local hero in the dawn of Sputnik, 1928-1957 -- Epilogue and conclusion: chudo (wonder) or chudak (crank), the legacy of Tsiolkovskii in the Khrushchev era and beyond 1964.
Sommario/riassunto	Long before the space race captured the world's attention, K. E. Tsiolkovskii first conceived of multi-stage rockets that would later be adapted as the basis of both the U.S. and Soviet rocket programs.

Often called the grandfather of Russian rocketry, this provincial scientist was even sanctioned by Stalin to give a speech from Red Square on May Day 1935, lauding the Soviet technological future while also dreaming and expounding on his own visions of conquering the cosmos. Later, the Khrushchev regime used him as a "poster boy" for Soviet excellence during its Cold War competition with the United States. Ironically, some revisionists have since pointed to such blatant promotion by the Communist Party in an attempt to downplay Tsiolkovskii's scientific contributions. James T. Andrews explores the complexities of this man to show that Tsiolkovskii was much more than either a rocket inventor or a propaganda tool. He was a science popularizer, novelist, technical inventor, and visionary, whose science fiction writings included futuristic drawings of space stations long before they appeared on any engineer's drawing board. Mining a myriad of Russian archives, Andrews produces not only a biographical account but also a study of Soviet technological propaganda, local science education, public culture in the 1920s and 1930s, and the cultural ramifications of space flight.
