PART THREE

COPERNICUS AS PHILOSOPHER
In an earlier effort to uncover the logical principles behind Copernicus’s arguments in *De revolutionibus*, I focused attention on his likely education in logic at Cracow. Because an examination of his arguments indicated that he had been trained in logical reasoning and argumentation, it was plausible to assume that he learned logic and dialectic as an undergraduate at Cracow. Today the formal study of logic has been relegated to mathematical technicalities and its practical study reduced to exercises in critical thinking. We can hardly appreciate the extent to which medieval universities trained their students in logic, devoting about twenty percent of courses to the study of works on logic.

Accordingly, I described the instruction in logic at Cracow in the 1490s, and tried to show how his teachers influenced Copernicus to develop the arguments presented in the Preface and Book I of *Revolutions*. I stand by the analysis and principal conclusions of the articles that appeared in 1995 and 1996. My subsequent examination of Copernicus’s education in law at Bologna and his reading of Neoplatonic supporters of Plato and of some Platonic dialogues, however, has led me to a deeper appreciation for Copernicus’s attention to indispensable methodological principles and his participation in the reform of ancient astronomy. By 1510 he formulated his answers to the principal foundational questions, and concluded what issues required a definite solution and which questions he could leave for others to answer. There is already sufficient evidence in *Commentariolus* to identify Copernicus’s argumentative strategies. However, he did not articulate them more fully until the 1520s in Book I of *Revolutions*

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2 The details are in chapters three, four, and seven. Earlier scholastics introduced a doctrine rejecting the paradoxes of strict implication that in practical disciplines like law was applied to evaluate conditional propositions. Even so, some Cracow logicians gave the doctrine a peculiar emphasis by stressing relevance as a condition of validity.