This thesis presents an overview of our knowledge of planet Mercury and its progress over the past four centuries. It includes research that is performed by the author during his PhD position at the Vrije Universiteit in Amsterdam. This research focuses on new insights on planet Mercury that result from NASA's recent MESSENGER space mission to Mercury, which ended in May 2015. The reader is provided with the historical and scientific context needed to fully enjoy the BepiColombo space mission to Mercury by ESA and JAXA, which has its launch in October 2018.

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