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On the Cover

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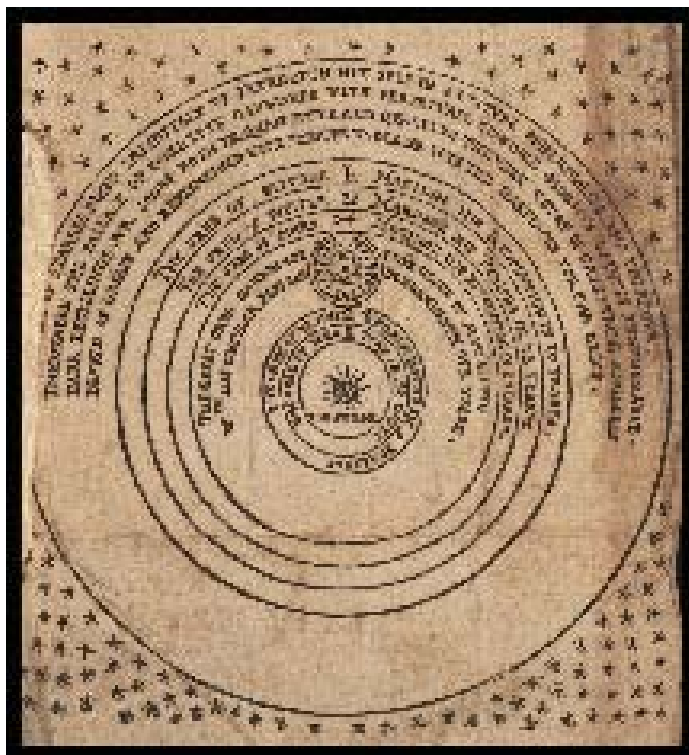
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SciTech News

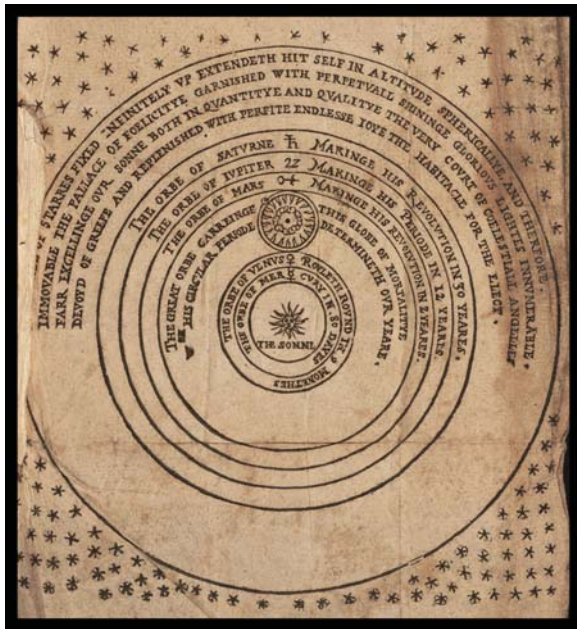
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SciTech News



On the Cover



Nicolas Copernicus was daring enough to propose in 1543 that the earth is a planet and rotates on its axis, but he still thought that the stars are part of an enormous stellar sphere. Copernicus stopped the stellar sphere from rotating, but he never dreamed that it might not exist at all. The first person to take that step, cutting the stars loose from their sphere and proposing that they might extend out indefinitely, was an Englishman, Thomas Digges. In an appendix to a new edition of his father's almanac, Digges suggested that the stars "indefinitely up extendeth," and he showed just that on a woodcut of the cosmos that he included with his "Perfit Description of the Coelestiall Orbes", first published in 1576. The illustration here is from a later edition of Leonard Digges, *Prognostication euerlastinge* (London, 1596). All editions are very scarce. (Photo and caption courtesy of the Linda Hall Library of Science, Engineering & Technology).

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Editor

Abby Thorne
132 Hemingway Place
Georgetown, KY 40324
(859) 539-5810
abby.thorne@gmail.com

Chair of the Review Board

Bonnie Osif
Pennsylvania State University
325 Hammond Building
University Park, PA 16802-1403
(814) 865-3697
bao2@psu.edu

Assistant Editor

Ann Koopman
Academic & Instructional Support &
Resources
Thomas Jefferson University
1020 Walnut Street, Room M110
Philadelphia, PA 19107
(215) 503-0441
Fax: (215) 923-3203
ann.koopman@jefferson.edu

Business Manager

Nevenka Zdravkovska
University of Maryland
1403J Mathematics Bldg
College Park, MD 20742-7011
(301) 405-9144
Fax: 301-405-9164
nevenka@umd.edu

Department Editors

Sci-Tech Book News Reviews
Selector: Susan Fingerman
smfinfo@verizon.net

Web Reviews

Beyond the Chemistry Web
Bob Buchanan
buchara@auburn.edu

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Offices: *SciTech News*, c/o Editor, Abby Thorne, 132 Hemingway Place, Georgetown, KY, 40324, (859) 539-5810, abby.thorne@gmail.com. Business Manager, Nevenka Zdravkovska, University of Maryland, 1403J Mathematics Bldg, College Park, MD 20742-7011, (301) 405-9144, nevenka@umd.edu.