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On the Cover

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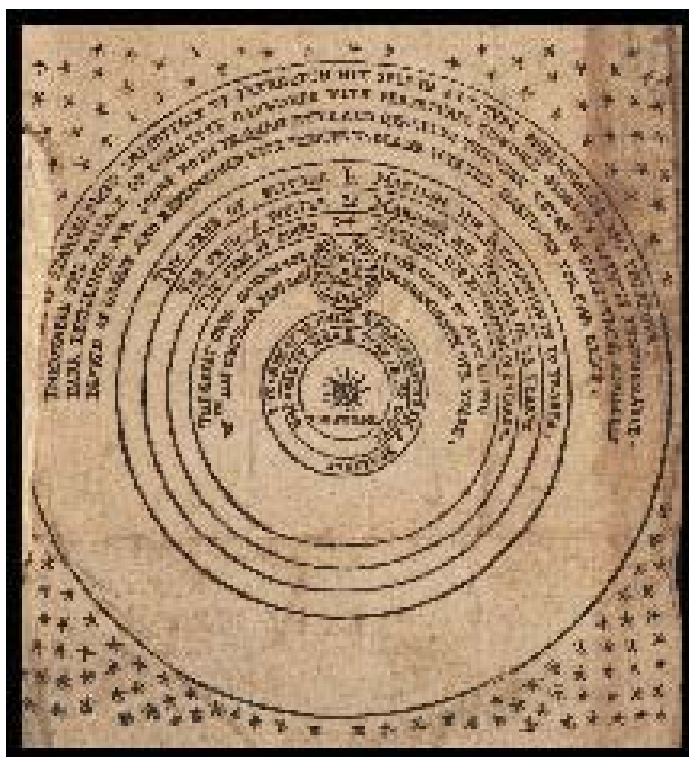
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SciTech News

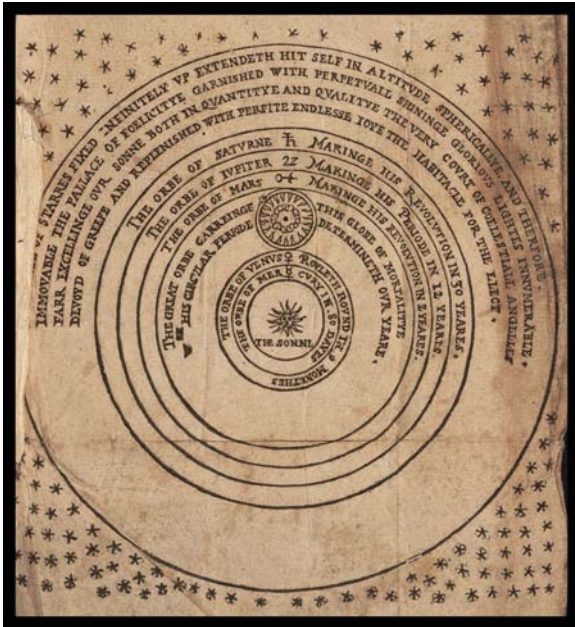
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SciTech News



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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