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On the Cover

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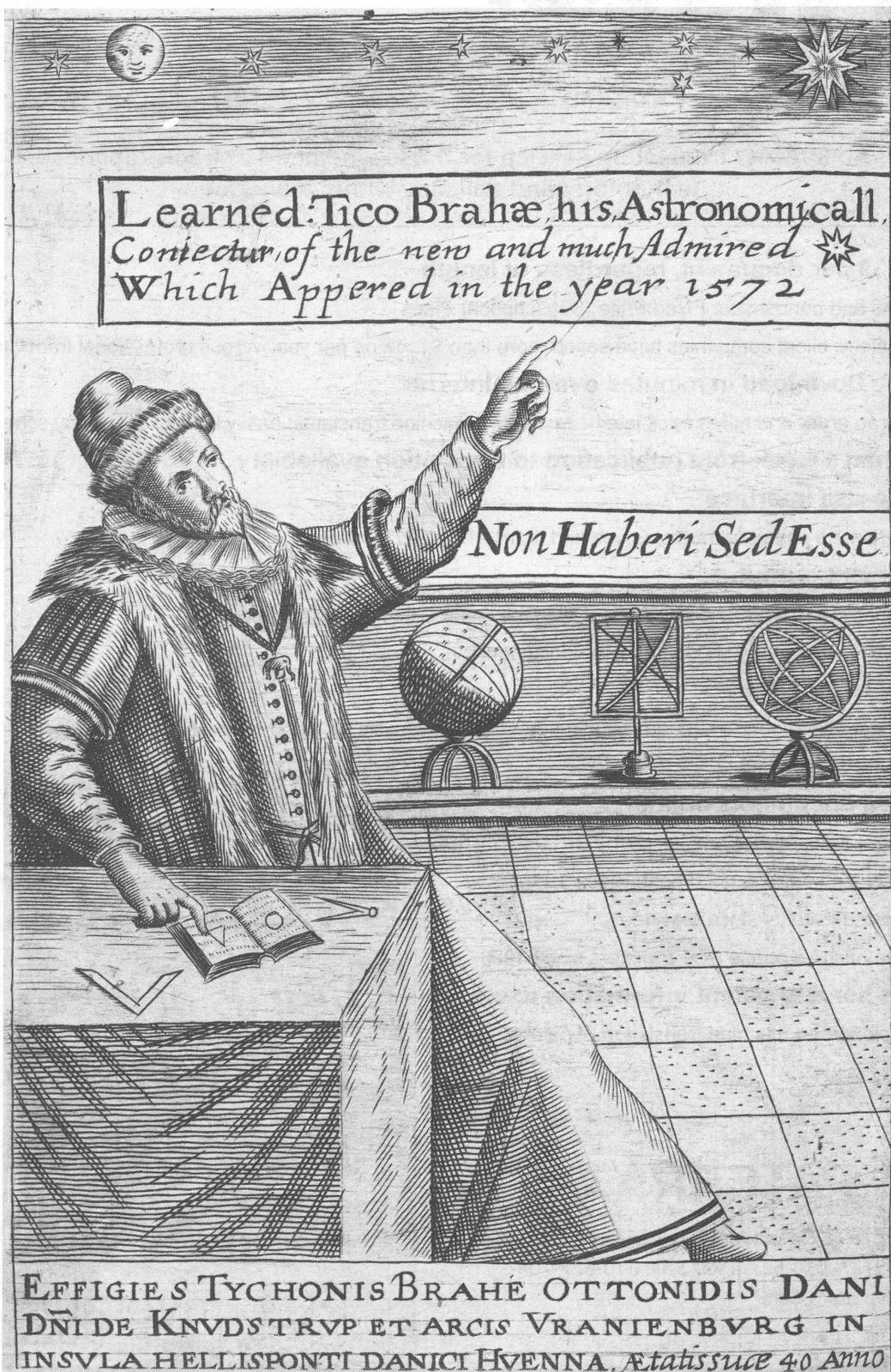
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On the Cover



In 1572 Tycho Brahe observed a nova (new star) in the constellation Cassiopeia. By making careful measurements with a sextant, Tycho discovered that the new star did not shift its position with respect to the other stars, and therefore it really was a star. Since conventional opinion held that the heavens were perfect and unchanging, this was disturbing, but Tycho's evidence was so convincing that his discovery marked the beginning of the end of the doctrine of the immutability of the heavens.

Tycho's treatise on the new star (*De stella nova*, 1573) was translated into English in 1632 as *Learned Tico Brahae his Astronomically coniectur*. For the occasion, a handsome engraved title-page was printed, showing Tycho Brahe pointing to his new star. The phrase "Non haberi sed esse" ("not to seem but to be") was Tycho's personal motto. (Photo and caption courtesy of the Linda Hall Library of Science, Engineering & Technology.)

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