

The Church & the Scientific Revolution

If religion gave man “a complete explanation of how the world came about and of how it works” were scientists committing a crime by arguing against it?

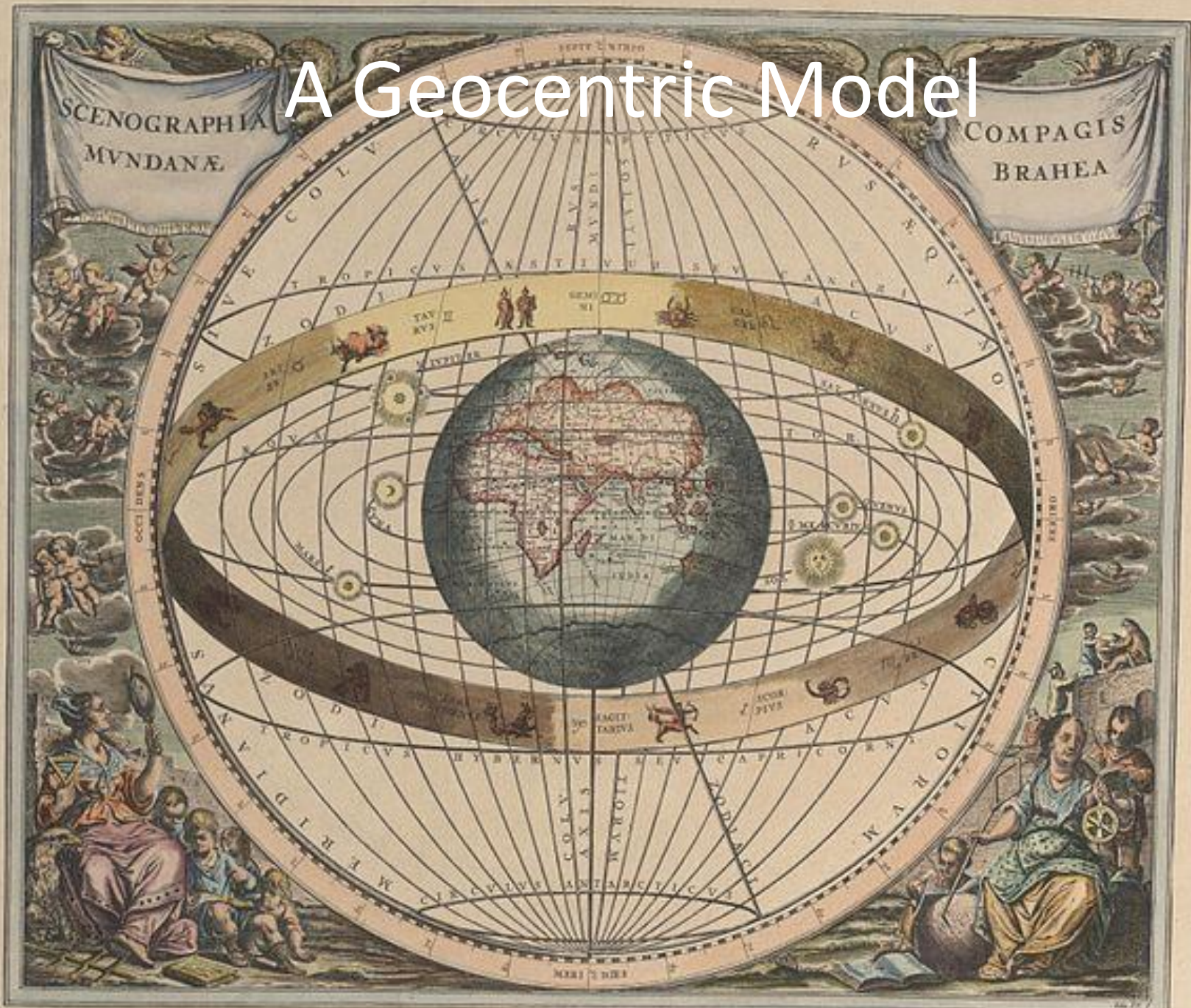


The medieval view...

...of the universe had blended the theories of ancient Greek thinkers with Christian teachings.

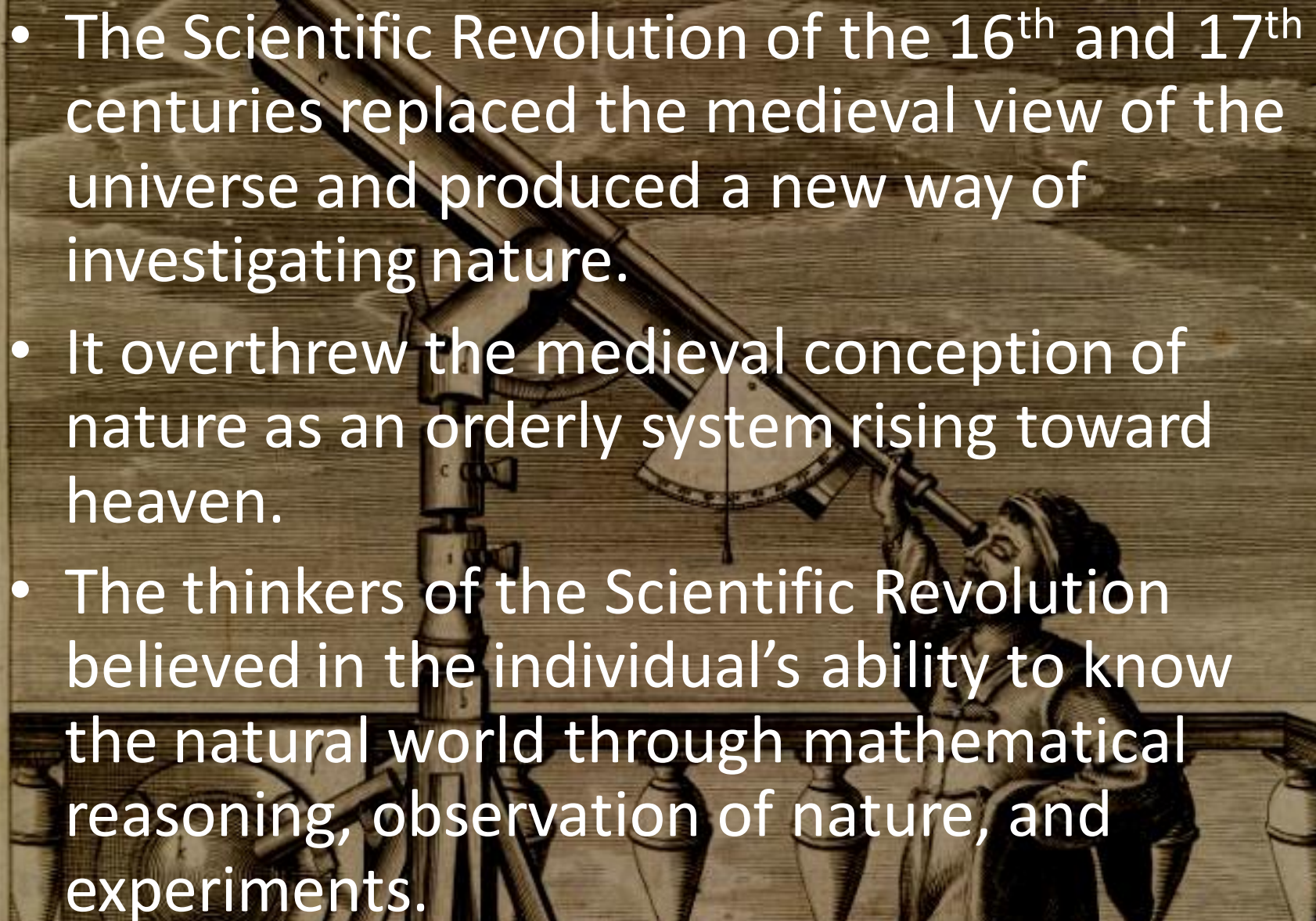
- In that view, a stationary earth stood in the center of the universe just above hell.
- Beyond the stars lay three heavenly spheres, the furthest was the home of God.
- An earth-centered universe fit the Christian idea that God had created the universe for men and women and that salvation was the aim of life.

A Geocentric Model



The destruction of the medieval view...

- began with the publication in of *On the Revolutions of the Heavenly Spheres*, by Nicolaus Copernicus, a Polish mathematician, astronomer, and clergyman.
- In his system, the sun was in the center of the universe, and the earth moved around it.
- Most thinkers of the time, committed to the medieval system and to the biblical statements that supported it, rejected Copernicus's conclusions.

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- The Scientific Revolution of the 16th and 17th centuries replaced the medieval view of the universe and produced a new way of investigating nature.
 - It overthrew the medieval conception of nature as an orderly system rising toward heaven.
 - The thinkers of the Scientific Revolution believed in the individual's ability to know the natural world through mathematical reasoning, observation of nature, and experiments.

- The Scientific Revolution was instrumental in shaping the modern outlook.
- By demonstrating the powers of the human mind, the Scientific Revolution gave thinkers great confidence.



Frontispiece of the Rudolphine Tables
By Johannes Kepler

Why Was Science Backward in the Middle Ages?

- The Middle Ages were the age of faith, and to that extent they were unfavorable to scientific speculation.
- In an age which was one of faith, men of intellect and spirit found the calls of faith itself—a task sufficient to absorb them.
- To put it simply, they had no time for occupations like science.

