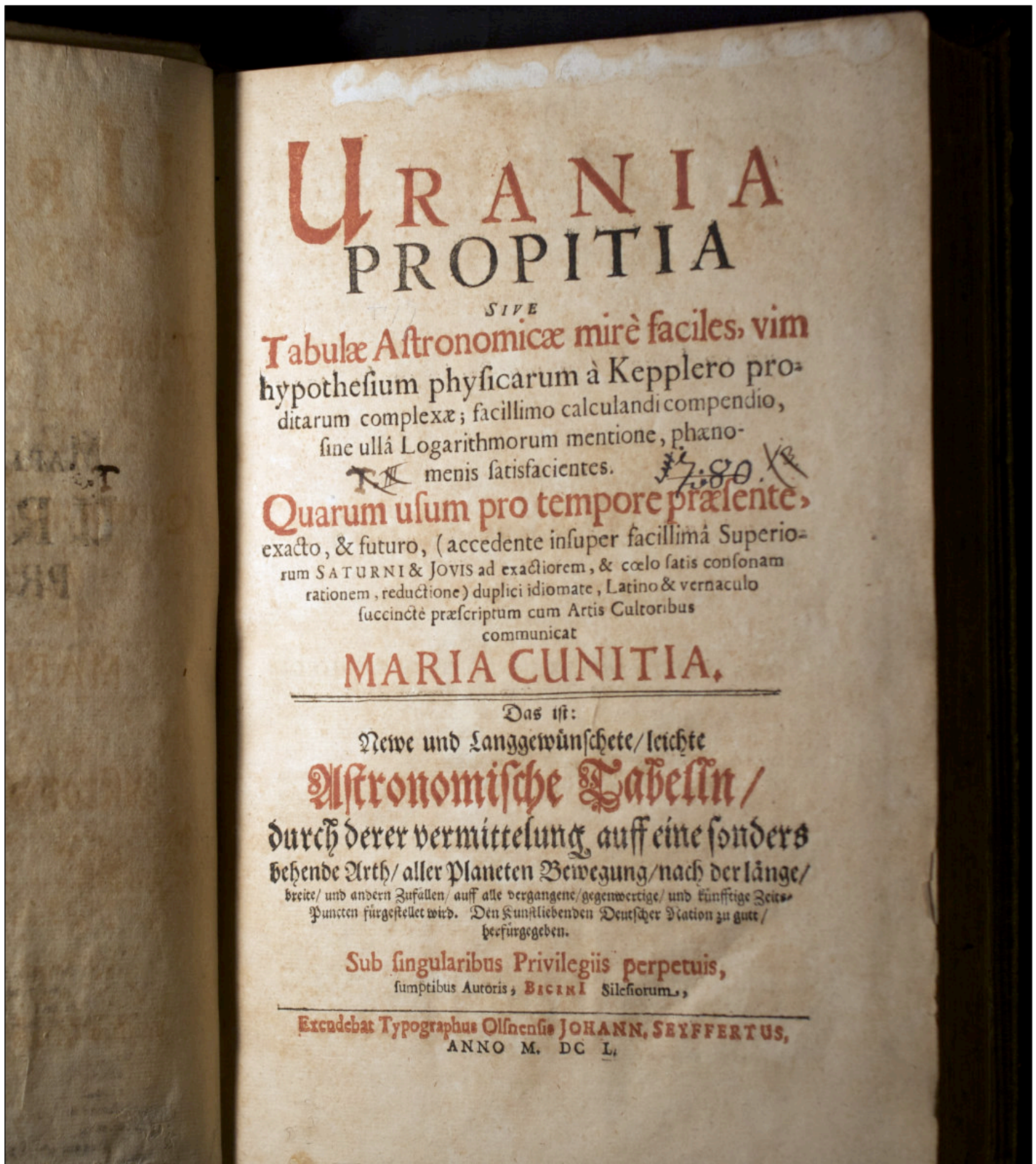


Maria Cunitz Kepler's Defender

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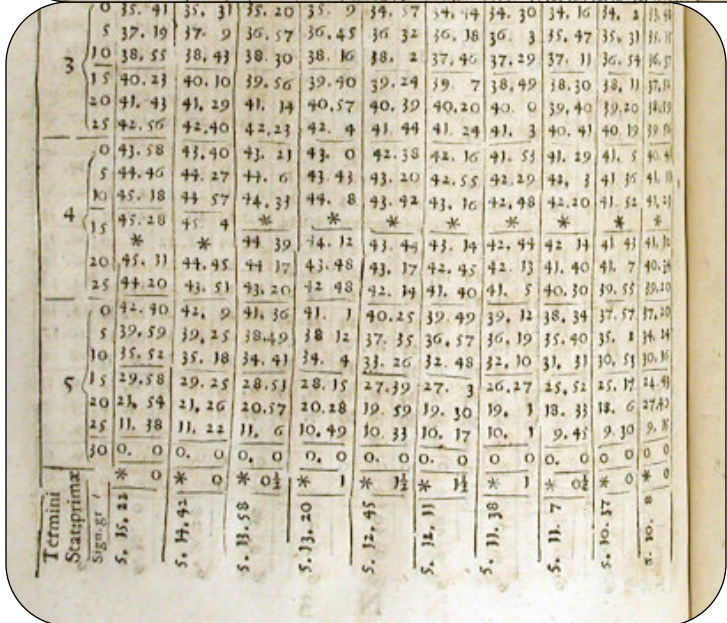
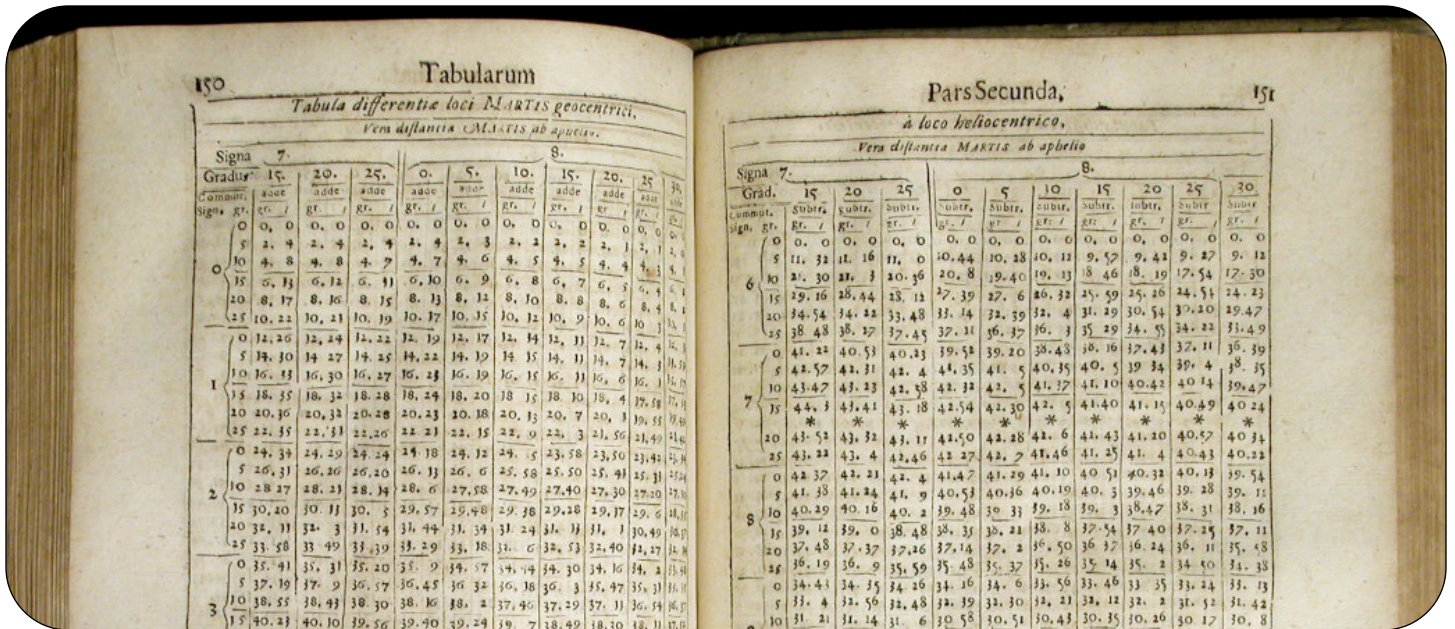


Maria Cunitz, *Urania propitia* ("Beneficent Urania, Generous Muse of the Heavens"; Oels, 1650)

Exhibit: Galileo's World | Gallery: Galileo and Kepler | No.: 9

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Why is it important in science to make data easily usable and accessible?



Maria Cunitz: Kepler's Defender

Prior to Newton, perhaps half a dozen astronomers accepted Kepler's three laws. Galileo was typical in ignoring Kepler's accomplishments. Yet this beautiful book is an exception: it clearly demonstrated that Kepler's laws were more accurate than anything that had come before. It was written by Maria Cunitz, one of the first astronomers to adopt Kepler's astronomy. Cunitz recast Kepler's planetary predictions into a form equally accurate but much more convenient and easy to use. Kepler's tables may have been cumbersome to use, but these were not. Cunitz made Kepler's achievement easy to grasp.

In an age when women were not admitted to European universities, Cunitz became one of the most accomplished mathematical astronomers of her generation.

Cunitz published this work in Latin, for the sake of European astronomers, but also in German, for the sake of others, outside university circles, who might wish to learn astronomy even without knowing Latin.

Kerry Magruder



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