

Gherardo da Cremona's *Theorica planetarum* provided students a handy summary of Ptolomaic astronomy as seen through the mediation of the Arabic scientists.

Cremonensis, Gerardus. [*Theorica Planetarum Gerardi*]. Venezia: Florentius de Argentina, [before 8 May, 1472]. Quarto, 10 5/8 x 6 3/4 inches (237 x 172 mm), [40] pages. 6 pen-and-ink illustrations.

The authorship of the *Theorica planetarum* has been in dispute for centuries; its importance for the history of astronomy, however, has never been contested. In manuscript, it was the standard textbook of theoretical astronomy for the late Middle Ages. In printed form, it served students for at least another century, providing a handy summary of Ptolomaic astronomy as seen through the mediation of the Arabic scientists. The traditional ascription of authorship to the prolific 12th-century translator of scientific and philosophical works from the Arabic, Gherardo da Cremona (ca. 1114–87) was challenged by the 18th-century Jesuit historian of Italian literature Girolamo Tiraboschi, and the 19th-century historian of mathematics Prince Baldassare Boncompagni (1851). Their attribution of the text to an obscure mid 13th-century astrologer Gherardo da Sabbioneta (a place near Cremona) was endorsed by George Sarton (1931) and the incunabulist Margaret Stillwell (1970). Pierre Duhem (1915), Richard Lemay (1978) and G.F. Vescovini (1992), however, have defended the original attribution to Gherardo da Cremona.

In both manuscript and printed form the *Theorica planetarum* was often accompanied by several other textbooks to form an instructional corpus for the university student. Chief among these companion printings was the *Sphaera Mundi* of Sacrobosco. The first separate printing of the *Theorica planetarum* appeared in Ferrara in 1472 from the press of the expatriate Frenchman André Belfort (Andreas Belfortis), edited by Piero Buono Avogario of Ferrara. The Venetian edition reproduced here appeared in the same year from the presses of Florentius de Argentina (i.e. Strasbourg) as an anonymous but integral tailpiece to Sacrobosco's *Sphere*. The two works were reprinted together in Venice (1478) and Bologna (1480). The components did not always remain intact over the centuries: the disbound pages are reproduced here.

The most notable feature of this copy are the manuscript additions. The spaces left for rubricated or illuminated initial letters have been left blank, but marginal glosses have been added throughout. These fill the function of an index, rather than offering commentary on the text. There are, in addition, six astronomical diagrams in pen-and-ink at **Spreads 3, 6, 9, 13 & 15**. Gherardo da Cremona's theories did not go unchallenged: Johannes Regiomontanus assailed his "crazy" theories in the *Disputationes contra Cremonensia deliramenta*, first published in Nuremberg shortly after the present edition, in 1474 or 1475. Together with Sacrobosco's *Sphere*, Regiomontanus's critical dialogue appears in the 1490 Venice edition available on rarebookroom.org as **sacsph**.