



**Barry Lawrence Ruderman
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**[Sphaera Mundi. Gerardus Cremonensis, Theorica planetarum] Iohannis de sacrobusto
anglici uiri clarissimi Spera mundi feliciter incipit [with:] Gerardi cremonensis uiri
clarissimi Theorica planetaru feliciter incipit**

Stock#: 82598
Map Maker: Sacrobosco
Date: 1478
Place: Venice
Color: Uncolored
Condition: VG+
Size: 6 x 8.75 inches
Price: \$ 17,500.00



Description:

The Wardington Copy. Important Celestial Incunabulum: the First Illustrated Edition, With Renner's Woodcuts of Spheres and Globes

This edition of the *Sphaera mundi* is notable for including the handsome woodcut illustrations by Renner, not found in earlier editions. The extremely rare first edition, which was printed at Ferrara in 1472, was unillustrated. The *Sphaera mundi* was a widely influential medieval astronomy text that recent scholars have described as a pedagogical tool which intended to "train the inner eye to see," that is, to teach the ability to transform what one saw with the eyes into an inner mental vision to properly understand the cosmos. The text presents the mathematical tools a student would need to understand the movements of the sun, the moon, and the planets in a geocentric system. While little is known of Sacrobosco, he is believed to have taught in the Faculty of Arts of the University of Paris in the early thirteenth century.



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His textbook on the sphere is important because it quickly became the most widely used work in teaching astronomy throughout Europe. Indeed, over two hundred different editions were printed between 1472 and 1673, and in several languages. Integral to this printed edition of the book is the *Theorica planetarum*, of unknown authorship, but usually ascribed to Gerard of Cremona (1114-1187). This complementary work sets forth further mathematical and technical information helpful in understanding Ptolemy's ideas on planetary motion.

The geometrical shapes, diagrams, cosmic sections, and orb models [of the Sphaera and Theorica] were all designed to inculcate skills in mentally visualizing the structures of the cosmos ... The skills of mental visualization and manipulation of images were ones that set apart the learned from the unlearned ... The intelligent eye was possessed only by a highly trained few. Only these few could 'see' the divine. - Crowther and Barker.

A very nice copy of this influential work of medieval astronomy with notable woodcut illustrations and with impressive provenance.

Provenance

John Charrington, The Grange, Shenley, Kelmscott Press bookplate;
"Bought of J.Wm. Brown, Edinburgh, Oct. 1913," inscription;
Lurley Manor, bookplate;
Fort Hill, bookplate;
Hamill & Barker (Chicago booksellers), 16 January 1961, inscription (probably sold to the following);
Lord Wardington, his sale, [Sotheby's London, The Wardington Library: Atlases, Part II, Lot 437](#),
(7,200 GBP), bookplate;
Private collection, Colorado.

Detailed Condition:

Small quarto. Pastiche binding of antique diced calf over old (upper) and modern matched (lower) beveled wooden boards, one brass clasp at center fore-edge. Moderate wear to binding. 48 leaves, 25 lines. Collation: a-b8 c-d6 e-f10 (a1 preface, Sphaera mundi, d6v blank, e1r Theorica planetarum, f10v colophon, verses by Franciscus Niger). Complete. Roman and Gothic letter, headings on a1 recto and e1 recto printed in red, 11 woodcut diagrams in text, 15 5-line white-on-black floreated woodcut initials. Occasional browning and foxing in fore-edge margins of first few leaves and a few of the other leaves, but text and woodcuts not affected. Overall condition is clean and very good.