

ASTRONOMY AND COMPOTUS AT OXFORD UNIVERSITY
IN THE EARLY THIRTEENTH CENTURY:
THE WORKS OF ROBERT GROSSETESTE

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This dissertation examines two works of Robert Grosseteste (c. 1169–1253), his astronomical textbook, the *De spera*, and his computistical work, the *Compotus correctorius*. Through the use of a technique labelled exposition, the texts are presented to the reader through a means that combines elements both of translation and of extended commentary, thereby introducing these works in detail in English for the first time. The texts are also analyzed in terms of their medieval context, specifically the goals Grosseteste wished to accomplish in constructing them and their place in higher education.

The first portion of the dissertation provides an intellectual and institutional context for Grosseteste's work, outlining the translation movement and the rise of the universities, especially Oxford, as they pertain to the questions of this dissertation. Grosseteste's biography is also considered, though certain facets of it are unsettled. By the end of the dissertation, it is suggested that Grosseteste's time spent in Hereford was formative for his later work in astronomy and compotus, and that his work in these areas was important for the development of natural philosophy at Oxford.

It is argued that the *De spera* was a basic introduction to astronomy, incorporating the newly recovered science of the Greeks and Arabs. The astronomy presented in this text does not achieve a high degree of sophistication, but rather is directed at presenting various

features of the created world. In relation to the astronomical work, other texts by Grosseteste are examined in order to delineate his interest in astrology.

The *Computus correctorius*, it is argued, was also composed as a textbook, though it contains information that probably was not taught to all students. The technical sophistication of the astronomy revealed in this text demonstrates the value of the newly translated Greek and Arabic science to Christian goals, namely, correcting the calendar. The fundamentally theological orientation of the work in maintaining the Christian calendar is also considered.

To Amy

CONTENTS

FIGURES	v
TABLES.....	vi
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	vii
PREFACE	1
CHAPTER 1—INTELLECTUAL AND INSTITUTIONAL BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY OF GROSSETESTE’S ASTRONOMY AND COMPOTUS TEXTBOOKS.....	11
1.1. England and the Twelfth-Century Renaissance.....	12
1.2. The Translation Movement and the Growth of Science in England.....	17
1.3. The Birth of Universities.....	34
1.4. The Growth of the University of Oxford, with an Emphasis on the Teaching of Quadrivial Subjects and Natural Philosophy.....	51
CHAPTER 2—A BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH OF ROBERT GROSSETESTE.....	63
2.1. Grosseteste’s Early Life.....	64
2.2. Grosseteste’s Association with Oxford.....	72
2.3. Grosseteste’s Intellectual Development, Especially Regarding His Scientific Works.....	82
2.4. Grosseteste’s Later Life as a Bishop.....	99
CHAPTER 3—GROSSETESTE, ASTRONOMY, AND THE <i>DE SPERA</i>	114
3.1. Grosseteste’s Astronomical Interests.....	114
3.2. Exposition of the <i>De spera</i>	148
3.2.1. Chapter One of <i>De spera</i>	149
3.2.2. Chapter Two of <i>De spera</i>	160
3.2.3. Chapter Three of <i>De spera</i>	168
3.2.4. Chapter Four of <i>De spera</i>	172
3.2.5. Chapter Five of <i>De spera</i>	176
3.3. Analysis of the <i>De spera</i>	185
CHAPTER 4—THE <i>COMPOTUS CORRECTORIUS</i>	200
4.1. The Genre of Compotus.....	201
4.2. Attribution and Dating of Grosseteste’s Computistical Works.....	205
4.3. Exposition of the <i>Compotus correctorius</i>	219
4.3.1. Chapter One of the <i>Compotus correctorius</i>	221
4.3.2. Chapter Two of the <i>Compotus correctorius</i>	228
4.3.3. Chapter Three of the <i>Compotus correctorius</i>	231
4.3.4. Chapter Four of the <i>Compotus correctorius</i>	241

4.3.5. Chapter Five of the <i>Compotus correctorius</i>	247
4.3.6. Chapter Six of the <i>Compotus correctorius</i>	251
4.3.7. Chapter Seven of the <i>Compotus correctorius</i>	252
4.3.8. Chapter Eight of the <i>Compotus correctorius</i>	258
4.3.9. Chapter Nine of the <i>Compotus correctorius</i>	264
4.3.10. Chapter Ten of the <i>Compotus correctorius</i>	269
4.3.11. Chapter Eleven of the <i>Compotus correctorius</i>	273
4.3.12. Chapter Twelve of the <i>Compotus correctorius</i>	275
4.4. Analysis of the <i>Compotus correctorius</i>	276
CHAPTER 5—CONCLUDING COMMENTS.....	305
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	312

FIGURES

Figure 1. Astrological Figure for Weather Prediction.....	129
Figure 2. Elemental Spheres.....	150
Figure 3. Circles, Parallels, and Ecliptic.....	158
Figure 4. Colures, Equinoxes, and Solstices.....	159
Figure 5. Parallel between the Equinoctial Circle and Summer Tropic.....	163
Figure 6. Horizon and Parallel.....	165
Figure 7. Fixed and Mobile Zodiacs.....	180
Figure 8. Illustrating the Leap Year.....	224

TABLES

TABLE 1. ROBERT GROSSETESTE'S SCIENTIFIC WRITINGS, C. 1209–1235, ACCORDING TO DALES'S AND MCEVOY'S CHRONOLOGIES.....	92–93
TABLE 2. CHRONOLOGY OF GROSSETESTE'S LIFE, INCLUDING PRECISELY AND IMPRECISELY DATED EVENTS.....	111–113
TABLE 3. THE TERMINI OF THE PLANETS.....	123
TABLE 4. THE FACIES OF THE PLANETS.....	124
TABLE 5. KALENDS, NONES, AND IDES.....	229
TABLE 6. YEARS, DOMINCAL LETTERS, CONCURRENCES, AND MONTHLY REGULARS.....	237
TABLE 7. THE ARABIC MONTHS OF THE YEAR.....	248
TABLE 8. THE EXPANSION OF ARABIC YEARS.....	250
TABLE 9. EPACTS AND REGULARS.....	264

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