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## On the Cover

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# SciTech News

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# SciTech News

Ellis Mount, Editor Emeritus



## On the Cover

The concept of an "elemental world" originated with Aristotle but was still common in the Renaissance. The four elements--earth, water, air, and fire-- were thought to fill the central part of the cosmos, each element in a sphere of its own. For a 1503 collection (which happened to contain the first publication of any of the works of Archimedes), Luca Gaurico offered a title-page woodcut that shows a human, perhaps Archimedes himself, standing on the earth, with the other elemental spheres behind him. The zodiac above represents the "celestial world" which surrounds us. It is interesting that the earth on which the figure stands is actually a map of the world as known before Columbus, with Europe and Africa at the left, and Asia extending off to the right. From Luca Gaurico (ed.), *Tetragonismus id est Circuli quadratura per Ca[m]panu[m], Archimede[m] Syracusanu[m] atque Boetium mathematicae perspicacissimos adinuenta* (Venice, 1503; photo and caption courtesy of the Linda Hall Library of Science, Engineering & Technology).

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