



An illustration of the Dendera Zodiac

SIMONNEAU, Charles?

[The Egyptian Zodiac from a bas-relief from Dendera.]

Paris, c.1823. Dissected and laid on linen, total 500 x 510mm, label of Charles Simonneau on the linen.

£450

An illustration of a bas-relief depicting the Egyptian Zodiac, originally in the pronaos of a chapel dedicated to Osiris in the Hathor temple at Dendera. It takes the form of a disc, held aloft by four women and four pairs of kneeling falcon-headed figures. At the centre is the northern Pole Star, shown as part of Ursa Minor depicted as a jackal. Most of the signs of the Zodiac are the familiar Greco-Roman representations, although Aquarius is represented as the flood god Hapy rather than Ganymede. Rediscovered c.1800 by one of Napoleon Bonaparte's 'Savants', it was sketched by Vivant Denon, who published his illustration in 1802, causing a sensation. In 1821 Jean Lelorrain, an early 'Indiana Jones', used gunpowder to remove it from the ceiling, taking it back to Paris where it was sold to Louis XVIII for 150,000 francs. It was first installed in the Royal Library but is now in the Louvre.

Stock ID :22315