



The Universe from a 16th century edition of Virgil's 'Georgics'

VIRGIL.

Iccirco certis dimensum partibus orbem...

Venice: Giunti, 1552. Old colour. Woodcut, 180 x 145mm, set in Latin text.

£850

A map of the Solar System, drawn to illustrate Virgil's 'Georgics', a poem on the theme of agriculture first published c. 29BCE. The universe is geocentric, with concentric rings for the orbits on the moon, sun and planets. The five major Circles of Latitude are also shown. The path of the Zodiac is marked, with the spring and summer signs of Aries, Taurus, Gemini, Cancer, Leo and Virgo. Hydra, the water snake, seems to exude from a man's mouth. The borders are filled with agricultural images, with sowing and reaping (with a harrow, plough, sickle and scythe), and woodsmen drinking. Bottom right is a ship with a man looking up at the Universe, comparing it to his charts. The woodblock was cut for Sebastian Brant's complete edition of Virgil's works, first published by Johann Grüninger in Strasbourg in 1502. We would like to thank Nathaniel Hess for identifying the edition of our example.

Stock ID :23044