



# Barry Lawrence Ruderman Antique Maps Inc.

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## (Hyginus's Astronomy) De mundi et sphaerae ac utriusque partium declaratione cum planetis et varijs signis historiatis [Clarissimi Hyginii Astronomi]

**Stock#:** 89256  
**Map Maker:** Hyginus  
**Date:** 1517  
**Place:** Venice  
**Color:** Uncolored  
**Condition:** Good  
**Size:** 6 x 8.5 inches  
**Price:** \$ 4,800.00



### Description:

#### *Roman "Poetical Astronomy" of Hyginus*

#### *With a Handsome Series of Zodiac and Constellation Woodcuts*

A classic work on the constellations, illustrated with beautiful woodcuts. The title page is also graced with a large and impressive woodcut illustrating Hyginus sitting on a throne, between Astronomy and Urania. The verso of the title has a full-page woodcut of a hand holding a large armillary sphere. In addition to these two woodcuts on either side of the title leaf, the book is generously illustrated with 47 additional woodcuts representing the signs of the Zodiac and the principal constellations. It is believed the illustrations were engraved by Giovanni Andrea, after those in the Ratdolt Edition of 1482. The charming printer's mark at the end shows a cat with a mouse in its mouth.

The Poeticon of Hyginus (64 BC - AD 17), initially published in 1482 by Erhard Ratdolt in Venice under the title *Clarissimi uiri Hyginii Poeticon astronomicon opus utilissimum*, is a significant work that delves into the myths associated with constellations, primarily based on the *Catasterismi*, often attributed to Eratosthenes. The present work, printed by the noted Venetian printer Melchiorre Battista Sessa (active 1506-1549), is similar in nature to the *Fabulae*, and is widely believed to be an abridgment of Hyginus' *Genealogiae* by an anonymous author in the 2nd century, who also incorporated a comprehensive treatise on mythology. The work's elementary errors in Latin and Greek suggest it may not have been actually authored by the distinguished C. Julius Hyginus, though it is often attributed to him by catalogers. The order of the star lists in *Astronomica* closely aligns with that in Ptolemy's *Almagest*, supporting the notion that it's a 2nd-century compilation.

### Rarity



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**(Hyginus's Astronomy) De mundi et sphaerae ac utriusque partium declaratione cum  
planetis et varijs signis historiatis [Clarissimi Hyginii Astronomi]**

Extremely rare in the market. Only three sold examples noted in RBH in the last 25 years. The present example is the first we have handled.

**Detailed Condition:**

Small quarto. Recent period-style limp vellum. Hand-sewn headbands. Endpapers renewed with old laid paper. Occasional foxing. Old staining affecting woodcuts of Capricornus, Aquarius, Pisces, Cetus, Eridanus, and to a lesser degree Orion. Old minor staining in gutter and fore-edge margins of title page (woodcut and text unaffected), with neat older paper repair to lower gutter corner of title leaf, barely affecting printed border of title woodcut. Some dampstaining to extreme edge of upper margin of last six leaves. Tiny but persistent pinhole-size worm hole in gutter margin throughout, printing unaffected. 48 unnumbered leaves (including final blank), with leaf G2 supplied in neat facsimile on laid paper (Taurus and Gemini woodcuts). With 49 woodcuts (including the two woodcuts on recto and verso of title) plus small printer's mark of cat and mouse on final leaf. Signatures: A-M<sup>4</sup> (M4 blank). Except for lacking one leaf with two woodcuts (supplied in neat facsimile), a decent and nice example withal.