



Barry Lawrence Ruderman Antique Maps Inc.

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[Lyra] (Stars Heightened in Gold)

Stock#: 48193
Map Maker: Bayer
Date: 1603
Place: Augsburg
Color: Hand Colored
Condition: VG+
Size: 15 x 11 inches
Price: SOLD



Description:

Striking full color example of Bayer's celestial chart of Lyra, with the stars heightened in gold. The present example has no text on the verso.

The present example also has the names of the neighboring constellations added in an early hand in the blank margins.

Lyra is a constellation in the northern hemisphere and is one of the 48 constellations named by Ptolemy, and is now part of the modern 88 constellations. Its principal star, Vega, a corner of the Summer Triangle, is one of the brightest stars in the sky. Beginning at the north, Lyra is bordered by Draco, Hercules, Vulpecula, and Cygnus. In Greek mythology, Lyra was associated with the myth of Orpheus, the musician who was killed by the Bacchantes. After his death, his lyre was thrown into the river; Zeus sent an eagle to retrieve the lyre, and ordered both of them to be placed in the sky. It is also represented as a vulture or eagle carrying a lyre.

Bayer's *Uranometria*, is one of the most important celestial atlases of the 17th Century and the forerunner of all star atlases which contained 51 star charts, of which 48 were Ptolomeic constellations.

Each plate has a carefully engraved grid, so that star positions can be read off to fractions of a degree. These positions were taken from the catalog of Tycho Brahe. Brahe's catalog had circulated in manuscript in the 1590s, but was not published until 1602.

Another important feature of the Bayer's atlas was the introduction of a new system of stellar



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nomenclature. Bayer assigned Greek letters to the brighter stars, generally in the order of magnitude, so that the bright star in the Bull's eye became alpha Tauri (and the brightest star in the Centaur became our familiar alpha Centauri.) These letters were placed on the charts themselves, and also in a table that accompanied each chart. Bayer's charts are rarely offered separately on the market.

Detailed Condition: