



Barry Lawrence Ruderman Antique Maps Inc.

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[Perseus]

Stock#: 33285op
Map Maker: Bayer
Date: 1624
Place: Augsburg
Color: Hand Colored
Condition: VG+
Size: 15 x 11 inches
Price: SOLD



Description:

Perseus is a constellation in the northern sky, named after the Greek hero Perseus. It was one of the 48 constellations listed by the 1st century astronomer Ptolemy, and remains one of the 88 modern constellations defined by the International Astronomical Union. It contains the famous variable star Algol (β Per), and is also the location of the radiant of the annual Perseids meteor shower.

The depiction shows Perseus carrying the head of Medusa the Gorgon.

The plate was originally included in the forty-eight maps of the individual constellations in Bayer's *Uranometria* in 1603. This is from the first reissue, without text on verso. The stars are identified by letters, Greek for the brightest, Roman for the fainter, with the order of the alphabets corresponding to decreasing brightness of the stars. Although a similar scheme had been introduced by Piccolomini (1540), it was Bayer's scheme that became universally accepted. Bayer based his constellation figures on the work of Jacobo de Gheyn and included stars from Ptolemy as well as the recent observations of Tycho Brahe and Keyser.

The atlas was also the first to represent the stars of the southern latitudes and based on observations which can be traced to an actual voyage of discovery—that of Houtman's first voyage to the East Indies in 1595-97.

According to Elly Dekker, the *Uranometria* substantially influenced Schiller's *Coelum Stellatum* and Kepler's *Tabulae Rudolphinae*. The work contains 49 charts of constellations, many expressed as familiar mythological figures, and two charts of the northern and southern hemispheres. Bayer estimated the



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magnitude of each star, from first to sixth magnitude and initiated the method of distinguishing the stars in each constellation by Greek letters-a practice still in use by astronomers today. Art historians acclaim Bayer's work for the beauty of figure design and the quality of the engraving. Historians of science are still bringing to light its influence on later developments in celestial cartography. Publication of the Uranometria virtually shaped the way the heavens would be perceived for more than two centuries.

Detailed Condition: