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Athlas

Stock#: 80489
Map Maker: Anonymous
Date: 1574
Place: n.p.
Color: Uncolored
Condition: VG
Size: 5.5 x 3.75 inches
Price: SOLD



Description:

Holding the Universe on his Shoulders

Fine illustration of Atlas holding the cosmos on his back.

Atlas is assisted by two strong figures flanking the celestial globe at center. One is dressed for battle, blazing with light (possibly Zeus). The other carries a scythe, a representation of death (possibly Hades). Arrayed at their feet are various representations of zodiac signs, including a scorpion (Scorpio), a goat (Aries), a sea goat (Capricorn), and a water bearer (Aquarius).

The myth of Atlas comes from Greek mythology. Atlas was the son of the Titan Iapetus and the Oceanid Clymene (sometimes Asia). His brother was Prometheus, creator of humankind. In the *Odyssey*, Atlas is said to support the pillars that separate heaven and earth. He was also shown as a king of northwestern Africa, where the Atlas Mountains are today, where he was turned into stone by Perseus due to his lack of hospitality.

The most famous story of Atlas comes from Hesiod's *Theogony*. Atlas joined the Titans in a war against Zeus. The Titans lost and faced Zeus and his allies' wrath. Atlas' punishment was to hold up the heavens for all eternity. He is usually depicted as holding a celestial globe on his considerable shoulders and has been a common trope in artistic works for millennia. Indeed, the oldest surviving globe—the Farnese Atlas, ca. 150 CE—is a statue of Atlas straining with the stars.

Detailed Condition: