

Basic Detail Report



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Title

Celestial globe by Willem Janszoon Blaeu

Date

1602

Primary Maker

Willem Janszoon Blaeu

Medium

Plaster, wooden stand, brass meridian

Dimensions

Overall: H 334 x Dia 230 mm globe, 1.95 kg Globe: 230 (H) x 260 (W) Stand: 205 (H) x 325 (D)

Name

Globe

History

The construction of the Blaeu globe coincided with the growth of the Dutch East India Company or Verenigde Oostindische Compagnie (VOC). During the 1600s the VOC was a rapidly expanding merchant organisation that established trade networks throughout Asia, by transporting rare spices and exotic textiles. The Dutch organisation greatly contributed to the discovery and mapping of the Australian coastline and Pacific Ocean. Frederik de Houtman made his observations of the constellations in the Southern Hemisphere while on board two voyages with VOC ships. His recordings would later be used by mapmakers such as Blaeu. Willem Blaeu began conducting research for the globe while studying with the astronomer Tycho Brahe in Denmark in 1595. In 1596 using a catalogue of stars compiled by Tycho, Blaeu constructed a celestial and terrestrial globe, a set to represent the earth's sky and earth. His globe used figures such as birds and horses to illustrate the position of constellations in the sky. Making the globe was a time-consuming process and mapmakers were often in competition to be the first one to issue the newest and most up to date version. When Blaeu released his first celestial globe in 1596 it was the most accurate representation for its time. However the work was quickly surpassed by a globe made by Hondius in 1600. Blaeu's second attempt in 1602 saw the inclusion of additional constellations in the southern sky, such as the Southern Cross.