

Double-engraved map, with contemporary hand-colour in part and in outline, Dutch text to verso.

THE FIRST COMMERCIALLY AVAILABLE MAP TO SHOW THE EXTENT OF WILLEM JANSZOON'S VOYAGE IN THE 'DUYFKEN', AND DUTCH DISCOVERIES IN WESTERN AUSTRALIA

India quae Orientalis dicitur et Insulae Adiacentes.

Author
BLAEU, Willem Janszoon

Publication date
[1635, or later].

Publisher
Willem and Joan Blaeu,

Publication place
Amsterdam,

Physical description
Double-engraved map, with contemporary hand-colour in part and in outline, Dutch text to verso.

Dimensions
410 by 504mm (16.25 by 19.75 inches).

Notes
This map of the East Indies was first published in various proof states in the first German edition of the Blaeu family atlas, 'Theatrum orbis terrarium, sive Atlas Novus', 1634-1635. The finished map,

as here, with dedication to Laurens Real (1583-1637), was Governor-General of the Dutch East Indies from 1616-1619, and an admiral in the Dutch navy, appeared in Blaeu's two-volume atlas from 1635 onwards and was only revised in 1664.

Importantly, it is the second commercially available map to show the full extent of Willem Janszoon's voyage in the 'Duyfken', preceded by the world map of Henricus Hondius of 1630 [1633], and the first to include details of the Dutch discoveries on the northern west coast of Australia. In 1606, Willem Janszoon, the captain of the 'Duyfken', sailed down the south coast of New Guinea and named a small piece of land "Duyfkens Eylant", sailed across the Torres Strait, down the west coast of Cape York peninsula, as far as the Arukun Wetlands, assuming that it was still part of New Guinea.

Unlike Johannes Janssonius map, 'Indiae Orientalis Nova Descriptio' (1630), which shows only the New Guinea portion of Janszoon's discoveries, the current map includes the area the 'Duyfken' sailed along the west coast of the Cape York peninsual. It also adds the discoveries of Jan Carstensz in command of the 'Pera' during his voyage of 1623, which followed the route of the 'Duyfken', and continued into the Gulf of Carpentaria. However, it omits, probably intentionally, the discoveries of Willem Joosten van Colster, in the 'Arnhem'.

Nevertheless, at the centre of the lower edge of the map is the fragmented coastline of northern Western Australia: "G.F. de Wits landt", named for Gerrit Fredericsz de Wit and his voyage of 1628; and "'t Landt van 'D Eendracht'", referencing Dirk Haartog's first landfall in 1616 at Ashburton River. Other discoveries in southern Western Australia are omitted, probably only because they are beyond the range of map's parameters.

As official cartographer to the VOC Willem Blaeu, from 1633, would have been privy to all this information almost as soon as it was known to the sailors, however, so stringent were the VOC's secrecy laws, that he withheld his knowledge from the public for nearly twenty-five years, … presumably until the Dutch had decided quite how little advantage the barren landscape would be to them… If only they had been able to scratch the surface!

Willem Blaeu had issued his first map of Asia as early as 1608, a large wall-map of the whole continent, and his first single sheet map of the area in 1618. It was included in the 1634 edition of the 'Theatrum…' without change until the 1660s. The current, new, map focusing on Southeast Asia was a considerable improvement on the general map. "Significantly for the day, the new map was constructed on the Mercator projection, although its scale was too small for it ever to have been intended for navigational use. One interesting difference between the older continental map and the new portrayal of Southeast Asia is in the depiction of Irian Jaya (western New Guinea). The continent map, following late sixteenth century models, shows Irian Jaya as a large island east of Halmahera. The new map of Southeast Asia shows a more correct outline of New Guinea and at the same time deletes the erroneous 'Seram' designation" (Suarez)

The two-volume edition of the 'Atlas Novus' (1634-1635) followed Blaeu's 'Atlas Appendix', and was published in French, Dutch and Latin in 1635. A third volume came out in 1640, and a fourth (England and Wales) in 1645, followed by a fifth (Scotland), the first separate atlas of Scotland. "So during the thirty odd years leading up to the publication of his 'Atlas Major', we see that Blaeu published two volume, three, four and six volume atlases, each increasing in size and geographical knowledge" (Wardington Catalogue).

The mapmakers

Willem Janszoon Blaeu (1571-1638) was the founder of a cartographic dynasty: the finest mapmakers of the Golden Age of Dutch cartography. He studied astronomy and instrument making

under Tycho Brahe in his tower at Uranienborg in 1594, before moving to Amsterdam and eventually establishing a shop in 1605, close to his contemporaries and rivals Johannes Janssonius and Jacob Colom. He was granted a privilege to print a navigational guide in 1606. Two years later, he produced a set of large carte-à-figure wall maps of the four continents and published 'Het Licht der Zeevaerdt', a traditional oblong format pilot with coastal profiles to accompany the sailing instructions. The book was very popular, popular enough for Janssonius to publish a pirated version in 1620. Blaeu responded by issuing the 'Zeespiegel' in 1623, an enlarged and improved version of his earlier work. The 'Zeespiegel' also sold well, but Blaeu could not afford to rest on his laurels; Jacob Colom produced a cheap and accurate challenger, 'De Vyerighe Colom' (1632). Blaeu's parting shot was the 'Havenwyser van de oostersche' in 1634, an amalgamation of his previous work, but it was prone to the same errors it singled out in its competitors.

Willem's sons joined him in the firm, with the eldest Joan (1596–1673) quickly taking control. Joan went to university in Leiden, studying mathematics and astronomy. After returning to work for his father, they produced their first atlas together in 1630, the 'Atlas Appendix'. The title was deliberately chosen to position is as a supplement to the well-respected atlases of Abraham Ortelius and Gerard Mercator, and it mostly contained maps from their stock of plates. Five years later, they produced their 'Atlas Novus' with more than twice the number of maps in the 'Appendix', which was published in four languages. After Willem died, Joan expanded the 'Atlas Novus' into the 'Atlas Maior', the largest and grandest atlas of its time. Any issue had between nine and twelve volumes, beautifully engraved and coloured, and cost as much as a house in Amsterdam. He also issued a wall-map in 20 sheets in 1648, 'Nova totius terrarium orbs tabula'. He continued to issue his father's globes, only modifying the largest.

Bibliography

Clancy, 'The Mapping of Terra Australis', 6.7; Clancy, 'So Came They South', pages 77-79; National Library of Australia, 'Mapping our World: Terra Incognita to Australia', page 116; Schilder, 'Australia Unveiled', 40; Tooley, 'The Mapping of Australia', 226; Suarez, 'Early Mapping of Southeast Asia', pages 201-202.

Provenance

Price: £2000

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