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## A Little Master's Piece

**Little Masters.** A name applied to certain designers who worked for engravers in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Called *little* because their designs were on a small scale, fit for copper or wood.<sup>1</sup>

IN EARLY 1986 I was making an extensive survey of the book collections in the State Library of Victoria in Melbourne for the purpose of finding any books containing maps of Australia. There were a few items in the Rare Books Collection that I wanted to examine, one of which was a work which had been rebound with a supplied title: *Visscher Typus Orbis Terrarum. Saec. XVII.*

*Typus Orbis Terrarum* turned out to be a small atlas, 15 x 19 centimetres, popularly known as a 'pocket atlas'. However, the word 'pocket' in the seventeenth century was more akin to a pouch, pochette, bag or sack that was carried separately rather than attached to a garment. The pocket atlas, designed to meet the needs of the 'citizens of lowest income',<sup>2</sup> turned out to be very popular, the maps being extremely well engraved, crisp and neat.

The atlas was lacking its title page and the title selected for the volume was actually that of the world map. Perusal revealed that the plates were prepared by a number of engravers: Claes Janszoon Visscher, Pieter (Petrus) van den Keere, Jodocus Hondius, Petrus Bertius and Benjamin Wright. Only six of the 242 maps had a date. These dates ranged from 1594 to 1642 and had been encompassed by the binder's title of *Saec XVII*, that is, seventeenth century.

In the opinion of the State Library's conservation department, the atlas was probably rebound in the nineteenth century. It has a vellum spine and corner tips and the marbled paper used for the binding is most likely of European origin and predates the early twentieth century when the atlas was acquired. To make matters just a little more difficult the contents of the atlas had been mixed up in the rebinding process and it became a matter of working methodically through the volume by the signatures until the earliest were found – in the middle. It transpired that the work had been prepared as four books, as the title page, when I finally received a copy, states. This became the exciting part, for here in the middle of the volume was a world map showing part of Australia.

At this stage I was fairly sure that what I had in my hand was a very significant item. This was reinforced by consulting Cornelius Koeman's great work *Atlantes Neerlandici*, a six-volume bibliography of Dutch atlases which suggested that the item was the penultimate edition of Barent Langenes *Caert Thresoor*. The history of this work is involved and described by Koeman<sup>3</sup>, later brought up to date by Peter van der Krogt's revision<sup>4</sup>.



Fig. 1. Title page (missing) of C.J. Visscher's atlas of 1649. By permission of the British Library. MAPS C.39.10.

However, at that time I had access only to Koeman 1969, which located only one known copy of this edition in the British Library. At this point it is pertinent to recall that communication across the world was by postal services, not email, and for those living in this continent a round-the-world trip to visit the great libraries of Europe and North America to progress one's research was an expensive procedure. The British Library finally confirmed my suspicions that, indeed, this was another copy, and sent me reproductions of the general title page and also the title page to the European book and its frontispiece along with a copy of the manuscript index to all the maps.

The volume had been bought by the State Library in November 1927 for a price of seven pounds ten shillings [£7.10.0]. However, it was known that the volume was purchased lacking the title page, as this is noted in the Library's Accessions Register and also in pencil in Italian on the end-page of the volume where the contents are collated. It was at this stage in its history that the signatures 'a' to 'h' were mixed up when the volume was rebound. The signatures 'a' to 'e' comprise the maps of Europe which make up book one. Signatures 'f' to 'h' comprise Asia, Africa and America, which are books two, three and four. The celestial and world maps are found in signature 'a'.

In the State Library of Victoria's copy the signatures are bound in the order, 'b', 'd', 'e', 'c', 'a', 'f', 'g' and 'h'. As a result the frontispiece (a1), double hemisphere celestial map (a2) and

the two world maps that begin this atlas, maps, *Typus Orbis Terrarum* (a3) and *Iehova* (a4), are found at pages 133 to 136 by my reckoning. (The pages of the book are not numbered.) To remedy the lack of a title page the binder had used the Europe title page in lieu. The atlas has a total of 247 pages out of a possible total of 248. The missing page is the general title page to the work, **N. I. VISSCHER | TABULARUM | GEOGRAPHICARUM | CONTRACTARUM | Libri quatuor | DENUO RECOGNITI | Anno 1649.** [Fig. 1]

The work comprises four books each newly revised with its own title page – *Europae*, *Asiae*, *Africae* and *Americae* – and an additional engraved frontispiece and general title page. The style of each book's title page is as the Europe example, viz, *Europae nova descriptio C. J. Visscher excudit*. Visscher's initials are rendered as an entwined monogram. This copy differs from the British Library's copy (Maps C.39.a.10) which has 252 pages, only in respect to the omission of the four frontispieces to each of the continental books and the general title page. The description given by van der Krogt<sup>5</sup> in his revised edition of Koeman's *Atlantes Neerlandici* accords exactly with the format of this volume with the exception of the missing title page. The atlas contains the 175 old maps of the *Caert Thresoor* as described, and the 41 plates engraved by Benjamin Wright which date from 1594 to 1603, and also the 23 new maps engraved according to van der Krogt in mid-seventeenth century style. Among these 23 new maps are to be found two of Australian interest, f36 and f37, or pages 199 and 200, being respectively, *T'Landt van de Eendracht* and *Anthoni van Diemens Landt aldaereerst beseylt ofte ontdeckt by de Schepen Heemskerck ende Zeehaen den 24 November 1642* [Anthony van Diemens Land first sailed to and discovered by the ships Heemskerck and Zeehaen the 24th November 1642]. Van der Krogt tells us that this was 'an experiment by Claes Jansz. Visscher for a new generation of pocket atlases'. His son Nicolaes Ioannes Visscher worked with his father in the business and it is his name that appears on the title page of the atlas, although the plate for this page had been engraved by his father whose distinctive entwined monogram appears lower left. Koeman<sup>6</sup> tells us that the first edition of this work appeared in 1598 produced by 'an obscure printer of Middelburg ... Barent Langenes'. There are 169 maps in this 1598 Dutch edition. Later parallel editions were produced by Cornelis Claesz and Jodocus Hondius in French and Latin. By 1649 Claes Jansz. Visscher's edition, derived from the Cornelis Claesz version of the atlas, had grown to 242 maps.

At the time of the identification of the State Library's copy I also noted another library holding this title besides the British Library. This was the William Clements Library at the University of Michigan. That library's copy, however, also lacked the title page and contained none of the maps of Europe; that is, it was lacking signatures 'a' to 'e'. The Asian book lacked the maps of Cyprus and Palestine but the atlas was otherwise complete. Their catalogue entry agreed with my findings re the African book, of maps 'g21' to 'g29' being missing. This was later confirmed by the British Library as an error in collation.<sup>7</sup> In the intervening period since 1987 other copies have surfaced, as noted by van der Krogt<sup>5</sup>, Baynton-Williams<sup>9</sup> and Baskes<sup>10</sup>. It now appears that there are a number of variants as two partial copies have been



Fig. 2. Claes Jansz Visscher. *N.J.Visscheri Tabularum Geographicarum Contractarum Libri Quatuor Denuo Recogniti*. Published by C.J.Visscher in Amsterdam 1649. Rare Book Collection. \*S 912 V82T

described, the Clements copy and the Coll. Ginsberg copy<sup>11</sup>. This latter copy having a different collection of maps, all European but not complete, as the signatures 'c' and 'd' are lacking. This copy also lacks the continents Asia, Africa and America.

In C. J. Visscher's atlas of 1649 there are four maps of interest concerning Australia, two of these being world maps, plus a map of Australia and a map of Van Diemen's Land. All have been attributed to C. J. Visscher.<sup>12</sup>

*Typus Orbis Terrarum* is the second map in the atlas. It is found as page 135 in the copy being described. [Fig. 2] Its title is enclosed in an oval frame above the map. The map extends from 180°W to 180°E on the prime meridian of Ferro, which means that Australia is shown in two parts on the right and left hand sides of the map which is enclosed in an oval frame. Under the map in its own oval frame are the words 'DOMINE EST TERRA ET PLENITUDO EIUS'. Beneath these words is the engraver's note, 'C J Visscher Excudit', with the initials shown as a monogram. The corners of the sheet are filled with strap-work in which the letter-number code 'a3' in the lower right hand corner is hidden. In the 1598 state this map was produced by Jodocus Hondius whose name has been removed and replaced by Visscher's in this updated version. The Hondius version of this map had errors in the numbering of the meridians of 100°E to 180°E which were shown as 200°E to 280°E. These errors remain in the updated version or second state by Visscher which does not appear in Shirley<sup>13</sup>. Rodney Shirley has kindly advised that this emended second state is mentioned

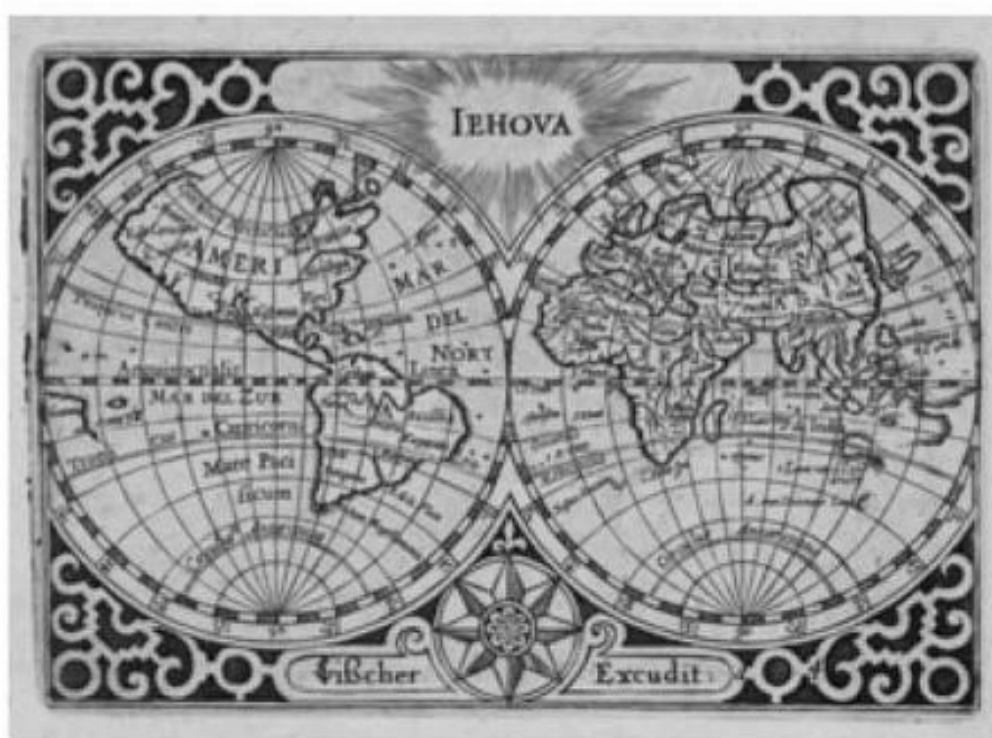


Fig. 3. Claes Jansz Visscher. *N.J. Visscheri Tabularum Geographicarum Contractarum Libri Quatuor Denuo Recogniti*. Published by C.J. Visscher in Amsterdam 1649. Rare Book Collection. \*S 912 V82T

briefly in the current 'Corrigenda and Addenda' of the 4th edition of his *The Mapping of the World*. In this updated 1649 state the coastline of the large 'Terra Australis nondum cognita' is shown only on the left side of the map extending from the Antarctic to the tropic of Capricorn with a break in the coast below 'Guinea No[va]', while on the righthand side the coastline of the hypothetical 'Terra Australis nondum cognita' has been removed and the outline of the Australian continent appears as known by the Dutch after Abel Tasman's voyage of 1642-43. The name given to the Australian continent is 'T' Lant van d'Eendracht'. Also shown and named is 'A. van Diemen's Lant'. The map is the same in all other respects to the first state.

The second world map in this atlas is found as page 136. It is in double hemisphere style and carries the word 'IEHOVA' in a decorative setting of sunbursts where a title would normally be placed in the centre top between the two hemispheres. [Fig. 3] Lower centre between the two hemispheres is the engraver statement, 'C J Visscher Excudit', with the initials shown as a monogram. The corners of the map are filled with strap-work in which the map number 'a4' is concealed lower right. The map is a further state of one originally prepared by and carrying the name of Jodocus Hondius although the first state appears in other works as identified by Shirley<sup>24</sup>, this 1649 state has not been described by him.

Changes in the 1649 state are the addition of the map number 'a4' and the removal of Jodocus Hondius' name which is replaced by that of C. J. Visscher. Geographical changes in



Fig. 4. Claes Jansz Visscher. *N.J. Visscheri Tabularum Geographicarum Contractarum Libri Quatuor Denuo Recogniti*. Published by C.J. Visscher in Amsterdam 1649. Rare Book Collection. \*S 912V82T

the western hemisphere are the removal of the coastline and name of 'Terra Australis nondum cognita'. The same changes have been made to the eastern hemisphere but the continent of Australia and Van Diemen's Land as known to the Dutch after Abel Tasman's 1642-43 voyage appear. Australia is named 'Lant van d'Eendracht'.

In addition to the updated world maps Visscher has added two new maps in the Asian section 'f36' and 'f37', which are 't' Landt van de Eendracht' and 'Anthoni van Diemen's Landt ...' which are found as pages 199 and 200. The first named is a map devoted solely to Australia and is almost certainly the earliest instance of a map of this continent being included in an atlas, which makes this edition of the atlas a most desirable acquisition for Australian libraries and collectors, especially due to its rarity. It is a delightful, crisp engraving, although the map itself has errors in dates of discovery of two landfalls on the west coast. [Fig. 4]

This map therefore stands along with the very few printed maps devoted solely to Australia, such as Hessel Gerritsz' two printed maps of 1627 and 1618 (updated to 1628) and the later French and English productions by Melchisedech Thévenot (1663) and Emanuel Bowen (1744)<sup>15</sup>. The Visscher map slots neatly between Gerritsz and the two later maps as regards the progress of Dutch discoveries. This is the earliest atlas map I know of with the name 'Eendracht' applied to the continent as a whole, although Schilder mentions an individual sheet map by Theunis Jacobsz, dated by him as between 1630 and 1640<sup>16</sup>, as

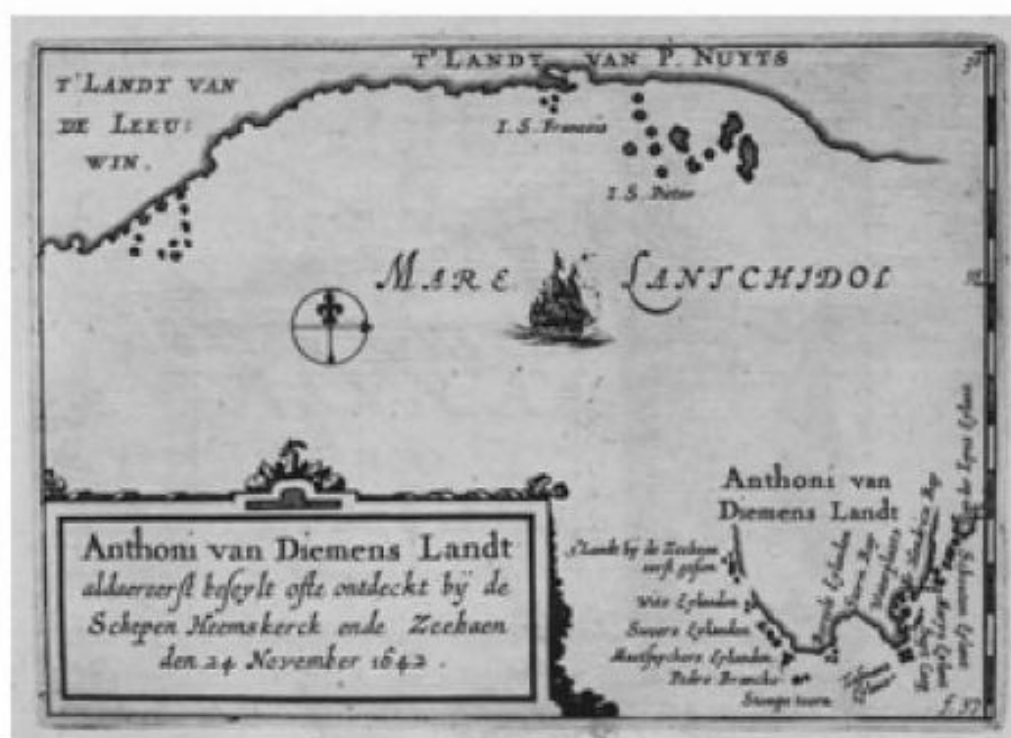


Fig. 5. Claes Jansz Visscher: *N.J. Visscheri Tabularum Geographicarum Contractarum Libri Quatuor Denuo Recogniti*. Published by C.J. Visscher in Amsterdam 1649. Rare Book Collection. \*S 912 V82T

also using 'Eendracht' for the name of the continent. Another unknown cartographer has used this form of name for the continent, in updating Arnold Florent van Langren's globe of about 1650, which makes it quite clear that the name 'Eendracht' was interchangeable with 'Hollandia Nova'<sup>17</sup>. 'Eendracht', meaning 'harmony' or 'concord', was the name of the vessel under the command of Dirck Hartog that discovered a large section of the western Australian coast in 1616. N. J. Visscher produced another map in 1657, this time a world map in a Dutch bible, in which his portrayal of the Australian continent is much as shown in the *Tabularum*,<sup>18</sup> also using the name 'Eendracht'.

The title of the map is found in a small simply decorated box in the lower right corner. In geographical coverage the map extends from 5°S to 35°S in one-degree intervals, and from Java, Indonesia, to the longitude of Cape York, Australia. The tropic of Capricorn is named. No longitudes are marked. The map carries a very simple compass rose. The ocean between the Australian mainland and the Indonesian islands is named MARE LANTCHIDOL, from the Malay words 'laut' misspelt as 'lant' and 'chidol' meaning 'south sea'<sup>19</sup>. The map shows the Indonesian islands of Madura, Java Maior, Baixos, I. Timor, Batulier I., Terra alta, Caber; Vleermuyse Eylant and the continent of Australia prior to Abel Tasman's voyages. As the title given to the map is 'Lant van de Eendracht', this may be why Van Diemen's Land is not included, as it would have been regarded as a separate discovery.

The portrayal of Australia on this map is similar to that in N. J. Visscher's world map

of 1657; this later map, however, has also 'Houtmans Abrolhos' and 'Wits Lant' that do not appear on the present map. There are some strange errors in the dating of discoveries, which include d'Edel's Land with the date of 1639 whereas it was actually discovered by Frederick de Houtman in the *Dordrecht* and Maarten Corneliszoon in the *Amsterdam* in 1619. This discovery of an area of coast lying between 27° 30'S and 33°S was attributed to Jacob Dedel, the supercargo aboard the *Amsterdam*, by Hessel Gerritsz, the chief cartographer to the VOC (United East India Company) in his 'Caert van t' Landt van d'Eendracht uyt de Journalen ende afteyeningen der Stierluyden t'samengestelt, A°1627'<sup>20</sup>. The second error of dating is that for Leeuwin Land which is given on this map as 1627 whereas in fact it should read 1622. It was named after the Dutch ship *Leeuwin* which reached the most southerly landfall on the South Land coast. The journal of the ship has been lost and the proof of its discovery is found in letters of the VOC and in Hessel Gerritsz' map previously referred to in respect of d'Edel's Land.<sup>21</sup> The following place names in addition to the Indonesian islands are found on this map:

**Group 1**

Keer Weer

Valsche Caep

Vleermuyse Eylandt                      NOVA

Drooge Bocht

**Group 2**

Hooch Lant

R.van C. Pult i.e. Speult

R. Batavia

R. Koen    GUINEA

Verenichde Rivier

Water Plaets

R. Staten

**Group 3**

Trial

Willems Rivier

t'Landt van Eendracht det. 1616

Dirck Hertogs Ree

Tortelduyf

Id'Edels Lant det. 1639 (should be 1619)

t'Lant van de Leeuwin det. 1627 (should be 1622)

t'Lant van P. Nuyts det. 26 Ianneuari 1627

I.S. Francois

I.S. Pieter

The first two groups of names show place names from New Guinea proper (Group 1), and names found in Cape York Peninsula (Group 2). Because the Dutch were unaware of Torres Strait, all this area was believed by them to be part of New Guinea. The remaining names (Group 3) are on the west and south coast of the continent. Comparing the nomenclature on the Cape York Peninsula with other Dutch maps, this map agrees most closely with that used on Henricus Hondius' world map, *NOVA TOTIUS TERRARUM ORBIS GEOGRAPHICA AC HYDROGRAPHICA TABULA*<sup>22</sup>. Both cartographers use 'R. van Pult'; the only difference between the two in the use of names is 'R. Stater' by Hondius rather than 'R. Staten'. Because Visscher's map shows only the area from 5°S to 35°S it excludes the



'Doodtslagers rivier' of the Hondius map. This small map of Australia is not noted by Schilder in his *Australia Unveiled*, although he cannot have been unaware of it as he includes commentary on its neighbour in the atlas, the map of Van Diemen's Land.

The fourth map of interest to Australians is that of Tasmania, *Anthoni van Diemens Landt aldaereerst beseylt ofte ontdeckt by de Schepen Heemskerck ende Zeehaen den 24 November 1642*. [Fig. 5] This map, 'f37', is the last in the book on Asia and the most recent addition according to van der Krogt.<sup>23</sup> The map is 9.5 x 13.5 centimetres, and it carries a compass rose and a latitude scale graduated in one degree intervals as the right-hand border. The title is found in a simple cartouche lower left. The map extends from 30°S to 44° 30'S and shows the southern coast of the continent of Australia from Cape Leeuwin to just east of the isles of St. Francis and St Peter. *T'Landt van de Leeuwin* and *t'Landt van P. Nuyts* are named. The island of Tasmania is shown as *Anthoni van Diemens Landt* with the south-west, south and south-east coasts partially delineated. The ocean is named *Mare Lantchidol*. There are fourteen place names on the island itself and one comment.

Schilder reproduces and comments on this chart in his *Australia Unveiled*, ascribing its source to the chart produced in December 1642 by Isaac Gilsemans, the cartographer and supercargo on the *Zeehaen*. Gilsemans' chart carries a note to the effect that land was first seen by the crew of the *Zeehaen*. This note appears only on the chart by Gilsemans which Schilder tells us is the 'oldest and most original cartographical document of Tasmania', and on Joan Blaeu's map *Archipelagus Orientalis sive Asiaticus 1659* contained in the *Atlas of the Great Elector*<sup>24</sup>.

The following names appear:

T'Landt by de Zeehaen eerst gesien (the land first seen by the Zeehaen)	Waterplaets
Wits Eylanden	Frederick Hendricx Bay
Sweers Eylanden	Van der Lyns Eylant
Maetsuyckers Eylanden	Schouten Eylant
Pedro Brancko	Marya Eylant
Stompe toorn	Suyt Caep
Boreels Eylanden	Tasmans Eylant
Storm Bay	

These same names all appear on Gilsemans' chart.

This atlas has never been offered for sale in the market. When approached for comment a respected London dealer in miniature maps hazarded a guess – and he emphasised this was only a guess – which could be on the low side, of £20 000 to £30 000. It seems that in this instance that the best things do come in small parcels.<sup>25</sup>

## Notes

- 1 E. C. Brewer, *The Dictionary of Phrase and Fable*. Ware, Herts, Wordsworth Editions, 1993. p. 764.
- 2 Cornelis Koeman, *Atlantes Neerlandici*. Amsterdam, Theatrum Orbis Terrarum 1967-1985, vol. 3, p. 253.
- 3 Cornelis Koeman, *Atlantes Neerlandici*. Amsterdam, Theatrum Orbis Terrarum, 1967-1985, vol. 3, p. 252-255.
- 4 P. C. J. van der Krogt, *Koeman's Atlantes Neerlandici*. 't Goy-Houten, HES Publishers, 1997- vol. 3, p. 428-434.
- 5 P. C. J. van der Krogt, *Koeman's Atlantes Neerlandici*. 't Goy-Houten, HES Publishers, 1997- vol. 3, p. 428.
- 6 Cornelis Koeman, *Atlantes Neerlandici*. Amsterdam, Theatrum Orbis Terrarum, 1967-1985, vol. 3, p. 162.
- 7 Personal communication from Tony Campbell, British Library, 1.10.1987.
- 8 P. C. J. van der Krogt, *Koeman's Atlantes Neerlandici*. 't Goy-Houten, HES Publishers, 1997- vol. 3, p. 428.
- 9 Ashley Baynton-Williams, 'Barent Langenes: an unrecorded miniature atlas', HYPERLINK "<http://www.mapforum.com>" www.mapforum.com Issue 2. [1999]
- 10 Roger Baskes, 'Another Langenes collation', www.mapforum.com Issue 7. [1999]
- 11 Ashley Baynton Williams, 'Barent Langenes: an unrecorded miniature atlas', www.mapforum.com Issue 2. [1999]
- 12 P. C. J. van der Krogt, *Koeman's Atlantes Neerlandici*. 't Goy-Houten, HES Publishers, 1997- vol. 3, p. 428.
- 13 Rodney W. Shirley, *The mapping of the World: early printed World maps 1472 -1700*. London, The Holland Press, 1983. p. 230 (state 1 only).
- 14 Rodney W. Shirley, *The mapping of the World: early printed World maps 1472 -1700*. London, The Holland Press, 1983. p. 199 state 1.
- 15 Günter Schilder, *Australia Unveiled: The share of the Dutch navigators in the discovery of Australia*. Amsterdam, Theatrum Orbis Terrarum Ltd., 1976. Maps, 30, 31, 85, 87.
- 16 Günter Schilder, *Australia Unveiled*, Map 43.
- 17 Günter Schilder, *Australia Unveiled*, Map 70.
- 18 Günter Schilder, *Australia Unveiled*, Map 77.
- 19 R. H. Major, *Early voyages to Terra Australis, now called Australia*. London, Hakluyt Society, 1859. p. x vii.

- 20 Günter Schilder, *Australia Unveiled*, Map 30, p. 76.
- 21 Günter Schilder, *Australia Unveiled*, p. 77-78.
- 22 Günter Schilder, *Australia Unveiled*, Map 39.
- 23 P. C. J. van der Krogt, *Koeman's Atlantes Neerlandici*. 't Goy-Houten, HES Publishers, 1997- vol. 3, p. 428.
- 24 Günter Schilder, *Australia Unveiled: The share of the Dutch navigators in the discovery of Australia*. Amsterdam, Theatrum Orbis Terrarum Ltd., 1976. p. 144, p. 167, p. 198, fig. 61, map 47, p. 80.
- 25 John Simpson, *The concise Oxford dictionary of proverbs*. Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1991. p. 13-14.