



J.A.L. Franks & Co.

In 1649 Claes Jans Visscher (a.k.a. Nikolaus) published an unusual atlas, which contains 242 miniature plates, all having alphanumeric plate numbers added at bottom right. There are copies of this very rare work in the British Library and the Roger S. Baskes Collection/Chicago's Newberry Library (239 plates). Occasionally though, some of the maps come to light. For example, about the turn of the century a volume consisting of the first three parts (a, b & c) of the five relating to Europe (97 plates) was sold by the London dealer, Graham Franks. Another three parts (g, h & f) relating to Africa (20 plates), America (25 plates) and Asia (37 plates) were sold at auction (Reiss & Sohn, May 2016, lots 1990, 1992 & 1993) and the hammer price for the last of these was €55,000.

This atlas, which has no text, includes three kinds of maps:

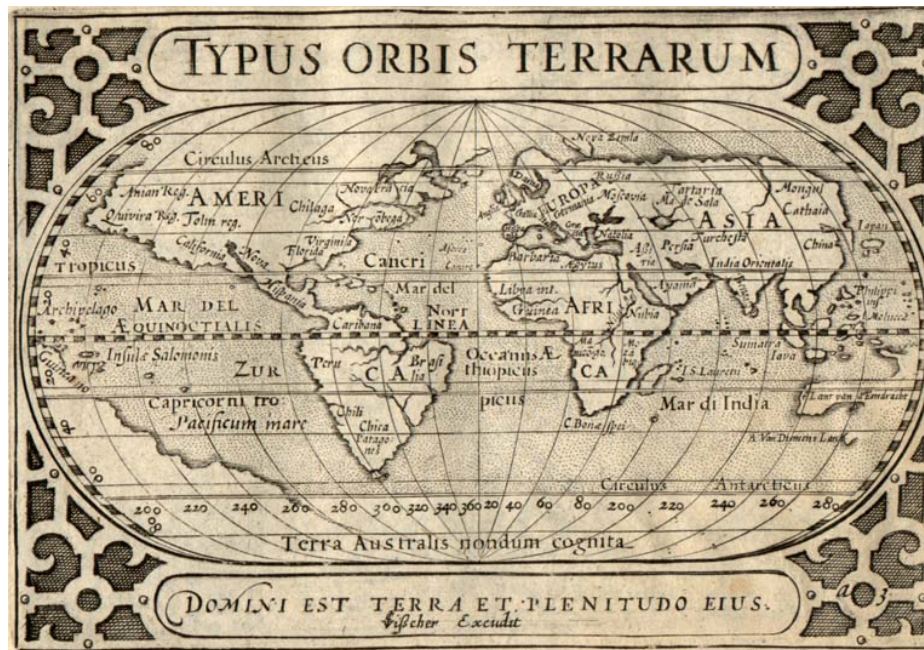
- those from the *Map-treasury* series of 1598 (see 1598a);
- those by Benjamin Wright engraved about 1600 (see 1649a);
- twenty-eight new ones apparently produced by Visscher specifically for it, with dimensions of about 82/90 x 122/131 mm., and all but six of them relating to Europe:

Lithuania; Comitatus Oldenborg; Duc. Holsatia; Meklenburg Ducatus; Ducatus Luneburgensis; Osnabrugensis Episcopatus; Paderborn; Monasteriensis Episcopatus; Nassovia comitatus; Hassiæ descriptio; Thuringia; Territorium Norimbergense; Erpach Comitatus; Sabaudia Ducatus; Grisons en Veltolina; Svevia nova tabula; Belgia Antiqua oudt Nederlandt. CJV excudit; Limburg Ducatus; Comitatus Zutphania; Marchionatus Sacri Imperii; Mechlinia Dominum; Orange Principatus;

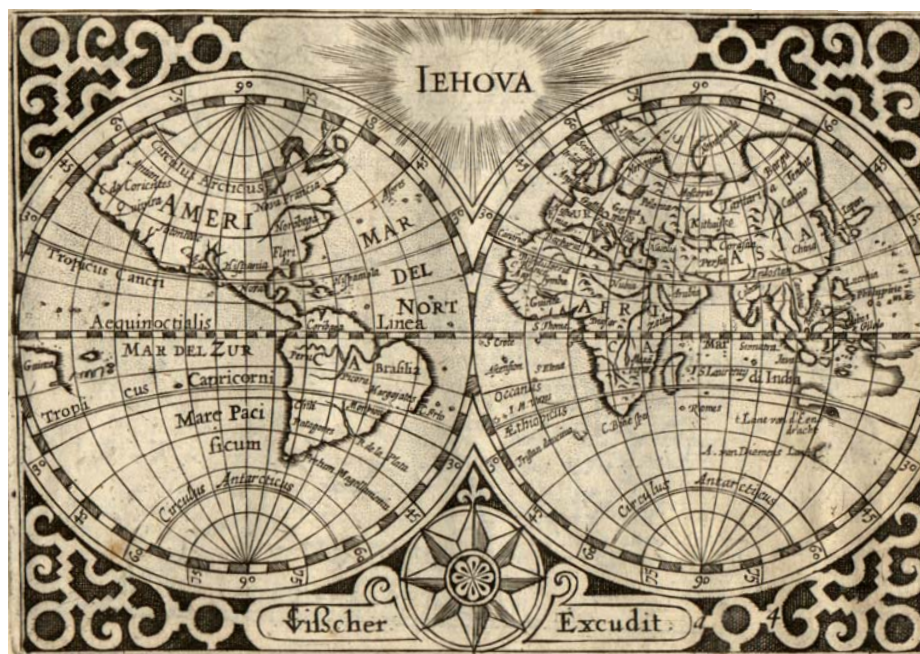
Among these six are two of considerable interest (see below): possibly the earliest maps of Australia (f.36) measuring 132 x 91 mm., and of Tasmania (f.37) measuring 133 x 94 mm.



The maps from the Map-treasury series of 1598 were unchanged except for the addition of plate numbers. However, Jodocus Hondius' two world maps were considerably retouched by Claes J. Visscher: Terra Australis much reduced on the oval one (a3) and deleted on the hemispheres (a4), with Hondius' signature replaced on both by that of Visscher (see below).



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N.J. Visscheri Tabularum geographicarum contractarum libri quatuor. Amsterdam, Claes J. Visscher, 1649.