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Direzione regionale  
musei della Toscana

PRESS RELEASE

## **Great things are happening at the Museo Galileo: Cornelis De Jode's terrestrial globe (1594) and a rare paper astrolabe (1668) recently acquired by the Ministero della Cultura are to go on public display**

*These two rare and valuable scientific instruments are to be presented at the museum today, 6 September, in the presence of Stefano Casciu, Regional Director of Museums for Tuscany, Roberto Ferrari, Executive Director of the Museo Galileo, and Simonetta Brandolini d'Adda, President of the Friends of Florence, whose generous contribution has made it possible to restore Cornelis De Jode's terrestrial globe.*

Florence, 6 September – **Cornelis De Jode's terrestrial globe**, an extremely rare example of historical cartography, was made in Antwerp in 1594, while **a paper astrolabe**, dated 1668 and possibly made in northern France, are **the two precious scientific instruments due to be presented at the Museo Galileo in Florence today, Wednesday 6 September**, in the presence of **Stefano Casciu**, Regional Director of Museums for Tuscany, **Roberto Ferrari**, Executive Director of the Museo Galileo, and **Simonetta Brandolini d'Adda**, President of the Friends of Florence, whose generous contribution has made it possible to restore Cornelis De Jode's terrestrial globe.

In view of their very special historical and cultural interest, **the Ministero della Cultura recently acquired them on behalf of the Direzione Regionale dei Musei della Toscana** which, in its turn, has **loaned them to the Museo Galileo on a permanent basis**. The Museo Galileo itself provided the scholarship certifying their immense value as testimonials to the development of science.

The two instruments are to go on display in a dedicated showcase designed to show them off in their best light in a recently renovated room on the ground floor, alongside another item acquired by the Ministero della Cultura in 2022: Philippe-Claude Le Bas's Gregorian reflecting telescope (c. 1720). The instruments will subsequently become part of the regular tour of the Museo Galileo.

### **Cornelis De Jode's terrestrial globe**

Dated 1594, the globe was made in Antwerp. When it came on the market in 2016, it had an export restriction order slapped on it and was purchased by the Ministero della Cultura for the sum of € 385,568 in November 2022. An extremely rare and valuable item in the field of cartographical history, it is the sole surviving globe to have been made by Flemish cartographer and printer Cornelis De Jode (c. 1568 – 1600), whose known output has hitherto been restricted to a set of cartographical globe segments now in the Bibliothèque Nationale de France in Paris. The globe was in a critical condition, revealing signs of serious deterioration including a number of glaring gaps on the paper's surface. Following in-depth diagnostic examination, it was subjected to a delicate and highly complex cleaning and restoration process funded by the Friends of Florence Foundation and performed by the Florence-based Officina del Restauro. The restoration was supervised by Stefano Casciu in conjunction with Lucia Nucci, the Direzione Regionale Musei's resident restorer, and with the additional supervision of Giorgio Strano, the Museo Galileo's Collections Manager, in connection with its historical and scientific aspects. After being displayed



for a short time in a showcase specially designed to show off the new acquisitions in their best light, Cornelis De Jode's terrestrial globe will take up its permanent place in the Museo Galileo's regular collection, representing a significant addition to the museum's conspicuous and important collection of terrestrial and celestial globes.

### **Manuscript planispheric astrolabe**

Possibly made in France, this astrolabe in paper and wood comes complete with its original case. The Soprintendenza Archeologica Belle Arti e Paesaggio per la Città Metropolitana di Milano received a request for export from its owner but, in view of its outstanding interest for the history of science, the Ministero della Cultura rejected the request and purchased it on behalf of the Direzione Regionale dei Musei della Toscana, earmarking it for the Museo Galileo.

The solar clock on the back of the instrument shows the latitude  $49^{\circ}30'$ , which suggests that it was designed for use in the far north of France or, more probably, in Bavaria (Nuremberg, at  $49^{\circ}27'$  N, was renowned for the manufacture of scientific instruments). The date, 1668, is compatible with the handwriting of the inscriptions. The instrument is extraordinarily accurate from a scientific standpoint, the graduated scales having been drawn with the utmost precision. The date of the spring equinox is ideally set at 21 March, which points to a Catholic environment compatible either with northern France or with Bavaria (within which the Nuremberg enclave was an exception: the Gregorian Calendar was only officially adopted there in 1699). The astrolabe is an extremely rare item of the greatest interest for the history of science, in view of the fact that only a handful of manuscript planispheric astrolabes on paper or card dating to earlier than the 18th century have survived to this day. The Museo Galileo, for example, has only a few fragments, most probably dating back to the 17th century.

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