

## THE PRINTED GLOBES 1686 - 1699

In Paris (1681-1683) Coronelli, a master in the mechanics of globe-making, had directed a team of Venetian carpenters and draughtsmen in the construction of a pair of globes of almost 4 meters in diameter designed for the palace of Versailles. These globes constituted a remarkable compilation of the latest astronomical and geographical information based on Dutch and French models of the mid-17th century, further enriched by important new information gleaned from the archives of the French ministeries and from the Académie des Sciences. The splendidly original figures illustrating the globes were the work of the atelier of the royal painter Charles Le Brun. Coronelli reproduced in print until 1699 these two works, of extraordinary beauty, reduced in different formats. The gores of the 108 cm celestial globe were engraved in Paris by Jean-Baptiste Nolin (1686), but the plates never reached Italy. The Marciana globe was mounted with the proofs and the texts and captions are written by hand. Nolin completed the engraving and published the globe in Paris in 1693. Two other versions of the same globe were later produced in Venice: one with a simplified design, representing the sky as seen from the earth ('concave globe', 1692); the other, engraved by Alessandro della Via, is a faithful imitation of the Nolin globe (1699) and - like the king's globe - shows the sky as could be seen from outside the celestial sphere ('convex globe', 1699). The celestial globe gores shown here were printed in 1782 from the original plates engraved by Nolin. The large printed terrestrial globe (cm 108) was made in Venice between 1685 and 1688 and had a single edition: only the dedication was corrected, to record the honorary titles obtained over the years by the author. After 1705 the copper plates of the terrestrial globe were cut along the tropics, to be easily printed in a volume collecting the gores of all the globes produced by Coronelli in Venice: the so-called 'Book of globes'. The gores of the great terrestrial globe on display here were printed before 1705, from still not reduced plates. Coronelli's large globes, published between Paris and Venice, sold well to princes, aristocrats and high ranking ecclesiastics, mainly in Italy and Germany. They were much appreciated thanks to their royal origin, which offered together a guarantee of updating and - in the case of the celestial globe in particular - a very refined graphic, and thanks to their size, superior to that of any printed globe ever produced until then. The smallest globes, all produced in Venice, only come to us in the form of gores: the tiny assembled globe of the Schmidt Collection is a very rare exception.