

Leen Helmink Antique Maps & Atlases

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Johannes van Keulen II

Untitled [Java Island]

Certificate of Authentication and Description

This is to certify that the item illustrated and described below is a genuine antique map, print or book that was first produced and published in 1757, today 268 years ago.

June 18, 2025

Cartographer(s)

Johannes van Keulen II

First Published

Amsterdam, 1757

This edition

Size

70 x 89 cms

Technique

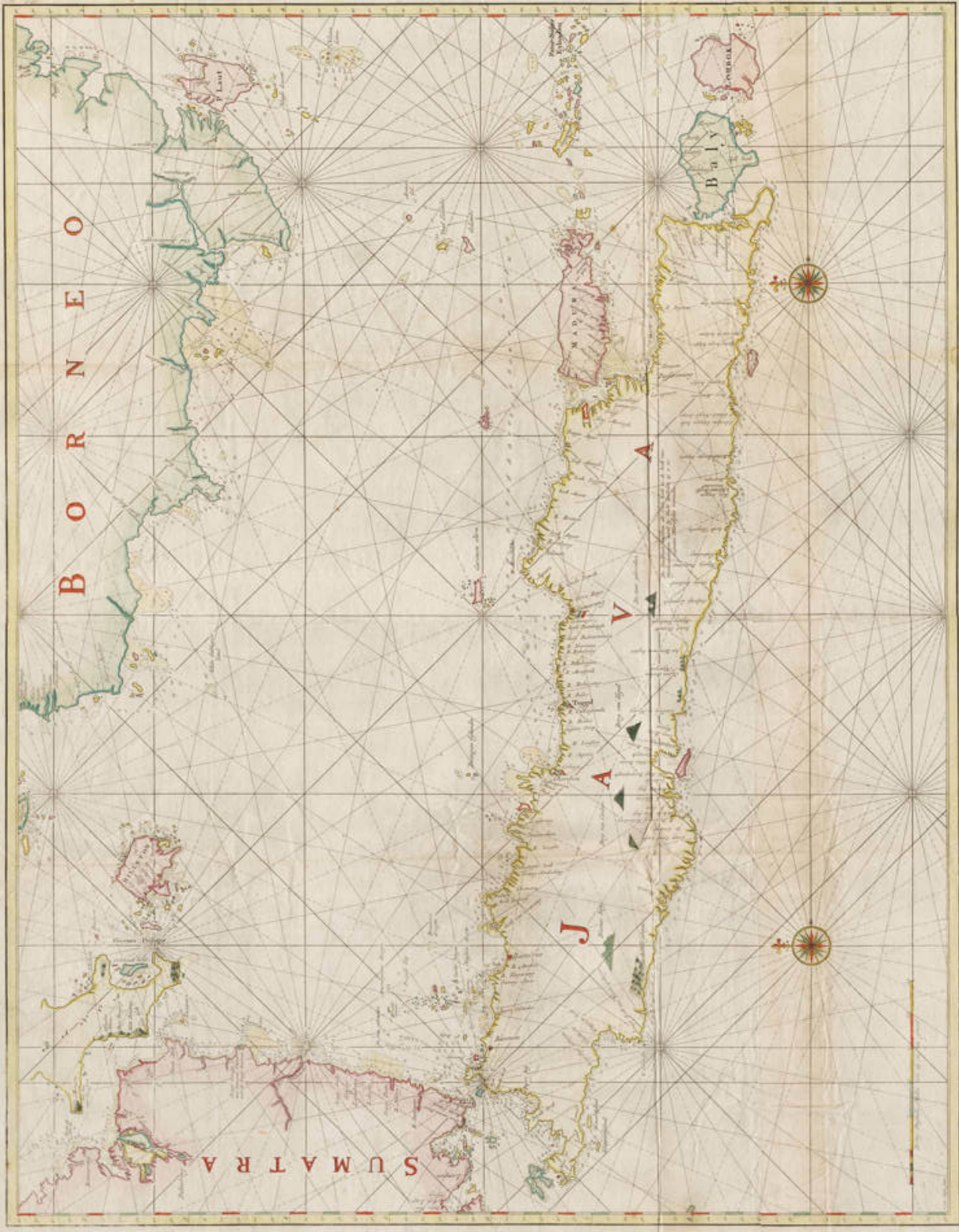
Copper engraving

Stock number

19911

Condition

excellent



Description

Second copy known.

Exceptionally large blueback sea chart of Java Island, the best, the last and the most detailed sea chart of the island that the van Keulen publishing house produced for the VOC.

Loose issue on blueback, for use on board of VOC ships.

The chart is engraved and signed by Jan van Jagen, one of the best engravers and cartographers of sea charts of his day.

The chart is full of detailed nautical information, with depth soundings, shoals, cliffs, safe anchorages, useful landmarks, rhumbelines and compass roses.

According to *the Van Keulen Cartography*, the chart must have been made between 1757-1779 (Appendix 5, page 188, chart 222).

The interior of Java has a fascinating text legend that reads:

"De Zuidkust tusschen de Oost hoek en de hoek van Wynkoopsbergen word by Veele Zeelieden 15 a 20 minuten Noordlyker bevonden."

"The south coast between the East point and the point of Wynkoopsbergen is found by many sailors 15 to 20 minutes more northerly."

Significance

This was the last and final sea chart of the island of Java that the van Keulen publishing house made for the VOC. It is also the most detailed one.

Rarity

Only known in one other example in the Maritime Museum in Amsterdam. All Van Keulen's loose issued sea charts are of utmost rarity, thousands must have been printed of these, with four copies on board of each VOC East Indiaman (one for the captain, first steersman, two second steersmen), All were used at sea, none preserved by armchair travellers.

Condition

Stunning original colours, an excellent copy.

Johannes van Keulen (1654-1711)

Gerard van Keulen (son) (1678-c.1727)

Johannes van Keulen II (grandson) (active 1726-1755)

The Dutch produced a remarkable number of enterprising and prolific map and chart makers but not even the Blaeu and Jansson establishments could rival the vigour of the van Keulen family whose business was founded in 1680 and continued under their name until 1823 and in other names until 1885 when it was from wound up and the stock dispersed at auction.

Throughout the history of the family, the widows several of the van Keulens played a major part, after their husbands' deaths, in maintaining the continuity of the business. The firm was founded by Johannes van Keulen who was registered as a bookseller in Amsterdam in 1678. In 1680 he published the first part of his 'Zee Atlas' which, over the years, was expanded to 5 volumes and continued in one form or another until 1734. More ambitious and with a far longer and more complicated life was his book of sea charts, the 'Zee-Fakkel', first published in 1681–82, which was still being printed round the year 1800. A major influence in the development of the firm was the acquisition in 1693 of the stock of a rival map publisher, Hendrik Doncker.

Although the firm was founded by Johannes van Keulen, he was primarily a publisher; it was his son, Gerard, a talented engraver, mathematician, Hydrographer to the East India Company, who became mainspring of the business which not only published charts but also books on every aspect of geograpy, navigation and nautical matters,

(Moreland and Bannister)

It was grandson Johannes van Keulen (II) who in 1753 produced Volume VI of the Zee-Fakkel for the VOC East Indiamen, containing printed charts for the navigation covering the waters from the Cape of Good Hope to Nagasaki . The atlas was not commercially sold and only for use on board of VOC ships, therefore it is also refered to as the 'secret atlas' of the VOC. The engraving quality and craftsmanship surpasses that of all earlier printed sea charts.

Sea charts from the secret atlas are among the rarest and most desirable sea charts for collectors.