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1688
Coronelli Terrestrial Globe

Explore
Both the celestial and terrestrial globes were based on the two 5.25 meter (15 ft) diameter globes Coronelli presented to King Louis XIV in 1683. Shrewdly capitalizing on his connection to the French throne, Coronelli was able to secure additional financial and political backing from the Roman Catholic Church and the Venetian government. This support enabled Coronelli to establish his workshop and to aggressively elicit geographical and astronomical information from some of Europe’s leading scientists and explorers. The result was not only the creation of the largest printed globes of its time, but a whole series of maps, atlases, star charts and even the first alphabetically-arranged dictionary. Coronelli’s 1688 globe illustrates the extent of late 17th century European exploration. For example, the eastern coast of Australia and the location of the mouth of the Mississippi were still open to conjecture.

Little is now known of Texas Tech’s Coronelli Globe from the time of its construction in 1688 until 1920. It was then that American newspaper magnate and tireless art collector William Randolph Hearst purchased it from a Paris antiques dealer who presumably added the globe’s present base. The globe was left crated until 1941, when Hearst auctioned it off. Texas Tech purchased the globe in 1968 from Dallas oilman Robert B. Moody as the library’s one millionth acquisition. Due to its deteriorating condition, the 300 year old globe was removed from public display in the mid 1980s. Realizing the globe’s historic and aesthetic significance, then Texas Tech Regent James E. Sowell provided funding for an extensive conservation treatment. This restoration, which was dedicated to former Texas First Lady Laura Welch Bush in May of 1997, has made it possible for the Coronelli Globe to be on permanent exhibit in the Southwest Collection/ Special Collections Library.