



## Globes in the Collection

### ***Indo-Persian celestial Globe, 1318/19*** ***Inventory No. 54471***

The Islamic tradition of the celestial globe was originally based on the work of Ptolemy, in particular translations into Arabic of his mathematical treatise *Almagest*. The practice of astronomy flourished in the early centuries of Islam with a number of significant observatories and Muslim astronomers contributing the growth of astronomical knowledge. A peculiar feature of Islamic globes is the way in which the constellations are depicted as if seen from earth even though the celestial sphere as a whole represents a viewpoint from outside the sphere. The tradition of constructing terrestrial globes is not established until the early European Renaissance period, again building initially on translations of Ptolemy's *Geography* into Latin.

This is probably a Syro-Egyptian celestial globe made in 718 A.H. (1318/19 A.D. in the Christian calendar). It is made out of brass, with inlaid silver stars. It is signed, at the North ecliptic pole, 'Work of the 'Abd ar-Rahmân b. Burhân al-Maw(tm)ilî [i.e. of Mosul] in the months of the year eighteen and seven hundred [A.H. = 1318/19 A.D.]'. It is inscribed at the South ecliptic pole, 'Drawn under the supervision of Ghyâth, known as al-Man(tm)ûr, in the months of the year [?eight]teen and seven hundred', and 'For the library (or cabinet of curiosities) of the Sultân al-Malik al-'Adil Ulugh Beg'.

The constellations are not engraved on the globe, but the principal stars are represented by inlaid silver points, with the name of each star engraved beside the appropriate point. Also engraved on the globe are the various circles. The stand is of later date than the globe.

