

Gerhard Stoehr Optik

Von: "Fontijn Antiek" <mfontijn@chello.nl>
An: "Gerhard Stöhr" <073717595-0001@T-Online.de>
Gesendet: Mittwoch, 27. April 2005 22:37
Betreff: Re: Jacobus Padre aus Amsterdam???

Dear Mr Stöhr,

As an admirer and close follower of your explorations in the field of ancient meteorological instruments, I am more than happy to give you my opinion on this curious barometer.

The printed paper scale plates are unmistakably Dutch in appearance. I am convinced that Habenicht and Holland were quite right when dating the piece to approximately 1730. The used motifs (volutes, acanthus leaves and the symmetrical seashell) are characteristic for the Dutch Louis XIV style (which was slightly later than the French equivalent). The brass or pewter register plates of Dutch (bak)barometers from the 1725-1745 period do often incorporate these elements; see for example barometer #27 in our collection. Another indication for the origin and date of the plates is that they are divided in a way that resembles the earliest Dutch bakbarometers, which were usually also fitted with both a Torricelli tube and a long thermometer (with either a Florentine or early Fahrenheit scale). Page 37 of the Habenicht and Holland book shows a clear example of such a barometer (it is wrongly dated; 1730-1745 would have been more accurate), another example is #25 in our collection.

The case is not of Dutch origin. An early 18th century Dutch barometer with a pine back is more or less unthinkable, an oak back would have been far more probable. The case also lacks any form of Dutch stylistic features.

I think that the instrument was some sort of "mail order"/"build-it-yourself" barometer. The printed plates were most likely a commercial export product that one could order in Amsterdam (then the printing capital of Europe). I presume that tubes and a case needed to be arranged in the place of destination.

Similar barometers are depicted on page 58 of *Barometers in Beeld*. It looks as if the plates of the most right barometer were simply glued on the wooden tube with which the plates were transported!

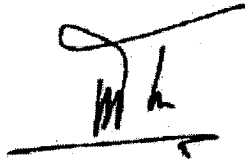
This kind of barometer could have been the result of an increasing interest of the common man for everything that had to do with science. The newly discovered wonders of nature were very "hot" and fashionable in those days. Probably due to this reason, the plates are overdone ("over-scientific"); meant to look very important and very learned. A real scientist, instrument maker or

wealthy lover of scientific instruments would have "snubbed his nose" for a product like this.

"Jacobus Padre" was probably a fantasy name thought up by the publisher of the plates for its "learned" sound. I searched the online available archives of the Gemeentearchief Amsterdam, but did not find anything. In any case, no maker of this name is known to me.

Ik hope my thoughts about the piece are of any use.

With kind regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Mh' with a horizontal line underneath and a small flourish above the 'h'.

Marco Fontijn

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