Video: Views of Earth from BepiColombo's flyby

April 17 2020

A composite image of the Western hemisphere of the Earth. Credit: NASA

A compilation of about 200 images collected by the joint European-Japanese mission BepiColombo during its first—and only—flyby of Earth on 10 April 2020, a manoeuvre needed to adjust its trajectory en route to its destination, Mercury. The spacecraft, equipped with three 'selfie' cameras, captured a series of stunning images of our home planet as it closed in, approached, and finally departed.

In this video, Earth first appears as a rotating marble from behind the spacecraft structure and high-gain antenna in the sequence captured on 9 April. Later, in the images shot just before closest approach, less than 13 000 km from Earth's surface, the planet appears in greater detail, with the outline of East Africa, the Arabian peninsula and India well in sight, between the spacecraft's instrument boom on the left and its medium-gain antenna on the right. Finally, the sequence of images taken by BepiColombo as it moved away on 10 and 11 April show a crescent Earth shining against the cosmic darkness; towards the end of the video, the Moon also makes an appearance, visible as a tiny speck of light near the end of the spacecraft solar array.

Provided by European Space Agency

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