



Wooden earth sphere, mounted on an axis with sun and moon orbits within typical Ptolemaic armillary universe, mounted onto a finely carved pinewood figure of Atlas, his outstretched hands supporting articulated models of Saturn with five moons and Jupiter with four moons, traces of paint, secured to a carved Corinthian column terminating in square pediment base.

A STRIKING ARMILLARY SPHERE HELD ALOFT BY ATLAS

[Ptolemaic armillary sphere].

Author

[Anonymous]

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c1780s].

Publisher

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[?Italy,

Physical description

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Dimensions

Diameter: 33mm (1.25 inches). Height: 1600mm (63 inches).

Notes

This striking column, with Atlas supporting a Ptolemaic armillary sphere, was probably an architectural pediment of a Palladian villa.

The number of moons depicted is of particular note as Saturn was thought to have five moons between 1684 (when Cassini discovered the fifth) and 1789, when Herschel found two more with his powerful new reflecting instrument; Jupiter's four moons were all discovered by Galileo in 1609-1610 with no more being found until 1892.

Bibliography

Provenance

Price:

Inventory reference: 12934