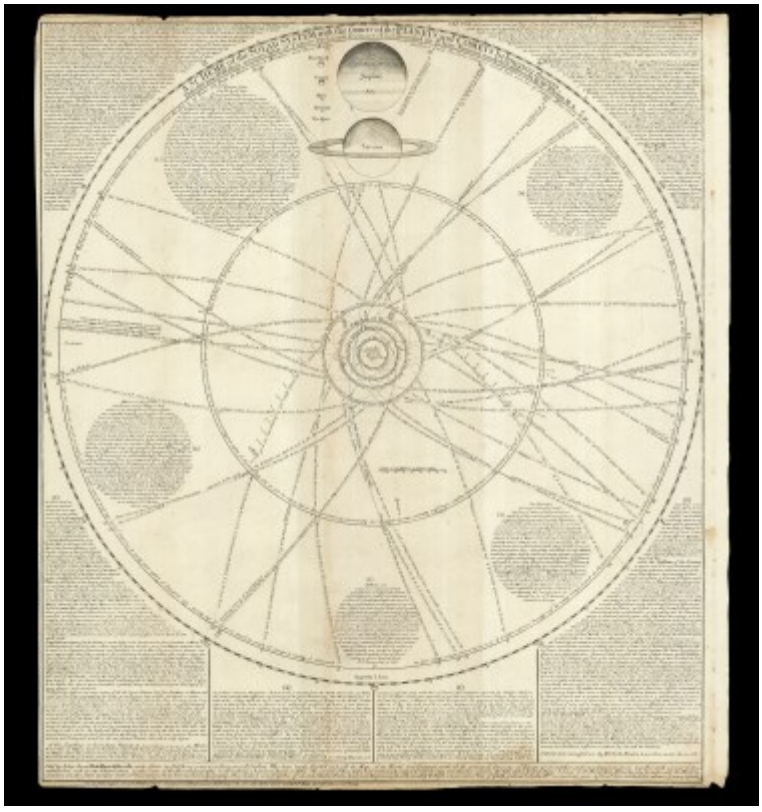


Engraved print.

RARE BROADSIDE ILLUSTRATING THE ORBITS OF THE KNOWN COMETS

A Scheme of the Solar System with the Orbits of the Planets and Comets Belonging Thereto Describ'd from Dr. Halley's Accurate Table...

Author
WHISTON, W[illiam]

Publication date
[c1720].

Publisher
John Senex,

Publication place
London,

Physical description
Engraved print.

Dimensions
600 by 685mm (23.5 by 27 inches).

Notes
A large, impressively engraved broadside that illustrates the solar system and the orbits of known comets.

The broadside is an expression of the general interest and curiosity produced by Newton's

discoveries. The orbital details of each comet, taken from Halley's catalogue published in the Philosophical Transactions, are engraved along its orbital track. The explanatory text of the planets and their orbital information is present in four engraved panels of extended text at each corner of the broadside. Finally, there are quotations from Newton's Opticks engraved as circular panels and located within the planisphere. Oddly, the illustrations of Saturn and Jupiter are prominent in the broadside. In 1759, after the work of the Alexis-Claude Clairaut and Mme Nicole-Reine E B Lepaute, the recovery of the comet sighted in 1531, 1607, and 1682 and noted by Halley, was a sensation. Clairaut had been the first to recognise and factor in the influence of the gravitational attraction of the two massive planets on the orbits of comets, and proved it with an accurate prediction of the date of return; in the process he also provided confirmation of the veracity of Newton's mechanics and dynamics. This was unknown to Senex and the makers of the broadside when it was being engraved in 1712.

This copy was printed on or before 1720, with John Senex's addess, coinciding with that given by Clifton. Few copies of the earliest issues survive; of those that do, several are erroneously attributed. Those after 1720 can be ignored (e.g., those impressions with the St Dunstan's Church address). The University of Bern has the single known copy of the 1713 impression. It is dated, below the plate line, and priced. The publishers' names, John Senex and John Maxwell, engraved in the legend coincide with the dates given by Clifton. Oxford and the BL have later reprints by Bowles.

Bibliography

Provenance

Price: £8000

Inventory reference: 20461

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