



Sundial With Bronze And Marble Cannon. Milan, 1832 - Pasquale Cittelli

5 300 EUR



Signature : Pasquale Cittelli, Milano 1832
Period : 19th century
Condition : Très bon état
Material : Bronze
Diameter : 24,7 cm.
Height : 16 cm. env.

Description

A gilt bronze and marble sundial with a cannon, a remarkable example of early 19th-century Italian scientific instrumentation. The circular base, made of thick marble, features a dial engraved with an extremely precise radial pattern, subdivided into concentric hour sectors and declination lines. The surface retains a natural antique patina, with slight signs of age perfectly consistent with the object's age. A triangular gilt bronze gnomon, used for direct solar reading, is fixed to the dial and anchored by means of its original lugs. Nearby is the meridian cannon, also in gilt bronze, mounted on an adjustable articulated support composed of profiled uprights, articulated arms, and original screws. The cannon is fitted with an adjustable convex lens, inserted into a circular bronze mount, designed to

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concentrate the sun's rays onto the light: at true solar noon, the concentrated energy ignited the charge and fired a blank round, allowing for a highly accurate acoustic signaling of the time. The maker's signature, "Cittelli fece in Milano 1832," is engraved in full on the left side of the cannon's support. This inscription is of exceptional importance, allowing for certain attribution and precise dating, features rarely found on this type of instrument. The piece is complete in all its parts, with its original patina and slight, non-invasive superficial oxidation of the bronze, attesting to the instrument's history and historical use. The numerals engraved on the marble edges are partially legible due to wear over time. The cannon sundial is one of the most fascinating applications of gnomonics between the 18th and 19th centuries. These instruments were intended for aristocratic gardens, public parks, the courtyards of institutional palaces, scientific academies, and observatories, where they served both a practical and symbolic function. Firing blanks at solar noon allowed for the synchronization of mechanical clocks, in an era prior to the adoption of civil mean time, making these instruments indispensable for regulating official time. Pasquale Cittelli, active in Milan between the late 18th and early 19th centuries, was one of the most esteemed makers of scientific instruments in northern Italy.

Working within a cultural context heavily influenced by the Napoleonic and post-Napoleonic periods, Cittelli specialized in the creation of astronomical, gnomonic, optical, and mathematical instruments for civil, military, and academic institutions. His works are distinguished by their high technical precision, impeccable quality of execution, and a harmonious balance between scientific function and decorative value. He produced horizontal and vertical sundials, measuring instruments, and garden meridian cannons, frequently signed and dated--a rare practice and one that is particularly appreciated today by collectors and researchers.