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Scientific Instruments, 1500-1900: An Introduction

Gerard L'E Turner

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The impulse to collect is an almost universal one, satisfying the hunting and acquisitive instincts, the love of beauty, and intellectual curiosity. The wealthy have collected rare and beautiful things from the earliest days of civilization, but the collection, or "cabinet," containing natural curiosities dates from the sixteenth century, and it was this type of collection in which scientific instruments found a home. In the twentieth century, we have come to accept a vast range of technical, often complex, equipment for everyday use. Science has become the very substance of our life style. But the appeal of historic scientific instruments remains, and from them much can be learned of the practice and development of science over four centuries.

This book traces the historical origins and development of instruments as they spread across the globe, explaining their manufacture, use, and adaptations. This must-have book for the active collector gives practical advice on dealing with instruments and checking their authenticity. It features a comprehensive international list of major museums and instrument collections. Over 100 superb illustrations show the instruments to their full advantage.

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