

# Biographical Encyclopedia of Astronomers

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Frisi, Paolo

Born Milan, (Italy), 13 April 1728

Died Milan, (Italy), 22 November 1784

Paolo Frisi was a mathematician, philosopher, and astronomer concerned with applications of Newtonian theory. A Barnabite monk from about 1746, he was professor of philosophy at Casale Novara and Collegio Alessandro in Milan (1753–1756) and professor of philosophy at Pisa (1756–1764). His final post was professor of mathematics at the Scuola Palatina in Milan from 1764

Frisi's physics research included hydraulics, electricity, and light, and his mathematical work concentrated upon kinematics. In astronomy, he contributed a book on the movement of the Earth (*De motu diurno terrae*), which won a prize from the Berlin Academy. He also published work on the obliquity of the ecliptic and the determination of the arc of the meridian. Frisi's *Cosmografia* of 1785 was a thoroughly modern text. He also contributed to the history of science through his studies of Galileo Galilei, Isaac Newton, Bonaventura Cavalieri, and Jean d'Alembert.

Frisi was a conduit of the latest French ideas into Milanese society. His work was honored by membership in the academies of Paris, London, Berlin, and Saint Petersburg.

*Richard A. Jarrell*

## Selected Reference

Maestro Marcello (1980). "Going Metric: How it all Started." *Journal of the History of Ideas*. 41: 479