

# Biographical Encyclopedia of Astronomers

© 2007 Springer

Fèvre, Jean Le

Born Lisieux, (Calvados), France, possibly 9 April 1652

Died Paris, France, 1706

Jean Le Fèvre was a calculator for the first official French ephemerides. Le Fèvre is reputed to have begun his career as a weaver. Around 1680, he was associated with a professor of rhetoric at the Collège de Lisieux, who was also an amateur astronomer. The latter had connections with Jean Picard and Philippe de la Hire, who were working on the first French ephemerides, the *Connaissances des temps*, and Le Fèvre was employed to help in the massive project of calculating planetary, lunar, and solar positions. On their recommendation, he was elected a member of the Académie des sciences for this work. Besides doing astronomical calculations, he helped La Hire with surveying the French coastline. When La Hire published his *Tabulae astronomicae* in 1687, however, Le Fèvre accused him of plagiarism, and when La Hire's son was commissioned by the academy to draw up new astronomical tables, a task for which Le Fèvre believed he was better suited. Le Fèvre composed a preface to *Connaissances des temps* attacking both father and son. The government ordered the preface to be replaced, and Le Fèvre was removed from the academy in 1701 on the grounds of nonattendance. He continued to publish ephemerides under the pseudonym J. de Beaulieu. There is no modern edition of Le Fèvre's writings.

*Stephen Gaukroger*

## **Selected Reference**

Tissot, Amédée (1872). *Étude biographique sur Jean le Fèvre*. Paris