

Biographical Encyclopedia of Astronomers

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Torricelli, Evangelista

Born Faenza, (Emilia-Romagna, Italy), 15 October 1608

Died Florence, (Italy), 25 October 1647

Evangelista Torricelli is best known for his research on geometry, hydrodynamics, and the motion of weights. He was a pupil of Benedetto Castelli, who was in turn a former pupil of Galileo Galilei. Galileo was able to express the principle of inertia in a clear and modern form: "When acting forces are absent, the motion is rectilinear with constant velocity." He observed Jupiter and noted the colored bands parallel to the planet's equator. His most important contribution to astronomy was his skill as a telescope maker, particularly for his excellent lenses. In a letter to Galileo, written on behalf of Castelli, he introduced himself, saying that he had studied Ptolemy, Tycho Brahe, Johannes Kepler, and Nicolaus Copernicus, and his studies had convinced him to accept the Copernican system. He was the first in Rome to have made a careful study of Galileo's *Dialogo sopra i massimi sistemi*.

Margherita Hack

Selected Reference

Loria, Gino and Giuseppe Vassura (eds.) (1919-1944). *Opere di Evangelista Torricelli*. 4 Vols. Faenza: Montanari