Alessandro Piccolomini Encyclopedia Article

Alessandro Piccolomini

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1508-1578

Italian astronomer and littérateur remembered for publishing the first printed book of star charts. *De le stelle fisse libro uno* (1540) consisted of 47 maps—one for each Ptolemaic constellation except Equuleus. Piccolomini introduced a lettering system for stars, and his maps indicated magnitudes, the direction of the equatorial pole, and direction of the celestial sphere's daily rotation. His failure to provide coordinates, though, made it impossible to accurately determine stellar positions.