Charles-Marie De La Condamine Encyclopedia Article

Charles-Marie De La Condamine

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Charles-Marie De La Condamine

1701-1774

French geographer whose celebrated Peru expedition (1735-44), along with Pierre Maupertuis' Lapland expedition (1736-37), helped verify Isaac Newton's theory of gravitation by demonstrating that Earth is flattened at the poles. Condamine was the first European to explore the Amazon region carefully. He shipped samples of the tree sap caoutchouc to France, thus introducing rubber to Europe, and he discovered curare. La Condamine was convinced that delicate scientific measurements were hampered by lack of standards and worked to establish an international unit of measure.