Girolamo Cardano Encyclopedia Article

Girolamo Cardano

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Contents

Girolamo Cardano Encyclopedia Article.....1

Contents.....2

Girolamo Cardano.....3

Girolamo Cardano

1501-1576

Italian mathematician and physicist whose work *Ars magna* (1545) contained Cardano's rule for solving reduced cubic equations and Tartaglia's method, obtained under oath not to reveal it, for solving general cubics. Cardano's publication initiated debates on the ethics of scientific secrecy that eventually crystallized into the belief that secrecy is of great harm to science. Cardano was a physician whose repute was second only to Vesalius, did important research in mechanics, and outlined the hydrologic cycle of rivers.