Pierre-Simon Laplace Encyclopedia Article

Pierre-Simon Laplace

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Pierre-Simon Laplace

1749-1827

French astronomer and mathematician whose manifold contributions to the exact sciences make him one of the greatest scientists of all time. Laplace's *Celestial Mechanics* (1799-1825) generalized and applied the laws of Newtonian mechanics to planetary motions and established the solar system's stability. Uninterested in pure mathematics, Laplace nevertheless made many fundamental contributions to the field including the Laplace transform method for solving differential equations (1777), research on solutions for the potential function, and establishing probability theory on a rigorous basis.