Pierre Vernier Encyclopedia Article

Pierre Vernier

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Contents

Pierre Vernier Encyclopedia Article.....1

Contents.....2

Pierre Vernier.....3

Pierre Vernier

1584-1638

French military engineer who invented the Vernier caliper or Vernier scale for measuring small angles and lengths. The instrument, sometimes simply called the vernier, consisted of a large stationary scale for measuring whole numbers, along with a smaller, movable scale for measuring fractions. Originally used in astronomy, it replaced the much more complicated astrolabe; ultimately, however, the vernier would gain even wider use among surveyors.