



The Calculus Wars: Newton, Leibniz, and the Greatest Mathematical Clash of All Time

By Jason Socrates Bardi

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Those interested in a lucid, nontechnical account of the battle between Isaac Newton (1642–1727) and German philosopher Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz (1646–1716) over who invented calculus will welcome science writer and debut author Bardi's cautionary tale. As early as 1665, Newton composed a manuscript detailing his method of calculus with examples, but after his unpleasant experience with a 1672 paper on optics that aroused the ire of Robert Hooke, an eminent member of the Royal Society who accused the younger man of plagiarism, Newton became shy of publishing. Between 1672 and 1676, Leibniz independently discovered calculus, using notation that has since become standard. When Leibniz published his results, Newton's allies rushed to discredit Leibniz in what developed, in Bardi's words, into "the greatest intellectual property debate of all time." While a few personal asides might better have been put in the preface, Bardi provides a timeless lesson about human pride as he describes the series of misunderstandings and miscommunications that led to the clash between these two great minds, "perhaps the greatest of their day." Illus. not seen by *PW*. (May 10)

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About the Author

Jason Socrates Bardi is a writer and editor specializing in the sciences. He has written for a number of different companies, government agencies, and private institutions, including NASA's Goddard Space Flight Center and the Scripps Research Institute.

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