

Mathematics 3820H – Mathematics from medieval to modern times

TRENT UNIVERSITY, Fall 2016

Assignment #5

Priorities

Due on Friday, 25 November.

Read [1] – keeping in mind that the author had an interest in the matter – and what the text has to say about the priority dispute between Newton and Leibniz, and then hunt down what additional information about it that you can, preferably as close to the original sources as you can find. Then answer the following:

1. Can we tell, or at least make a reasonable guess, whether or not Newton and Leibniz invented calculus independently? Support your conclusion(s) with the best evidence you can find. Do make sure to consider reasonable alternative hypotheses and the evidence for and against these. [10]

REFERENCE

1. *An Account of the Book Entituled Commercium Epistolicum Collinii et Alliorum, de Analyti Promota*, by Isaac Newton [writing anonymously], *Philosophical Transaction of the Royal Society of London*, No. 342, January and February 1714, pp. 173-224. This is reprinted on pp. 116-153 of *The Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society of London, from their commencement, in 1665, to the year 1800; Abridged*, Vol. VI (London, 1809), which can be found online (pdf and epub) at:

<http://books.google.ca/books?id=t0JKAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA116>

An edition prepared by D.R. Wilkins can be found online (pdf) at:

<http://www.maths.tcd.ie/pub/HistMath/People/Newton/CommerciumAccount/>