Lodovico Ferrari Encyclopedia Article

Lodovico Ferrari

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Lodovico Ferrari

1522-1565

Italian mathematician who came to early prominence as assistant to Girolamo Cardano (1501-1576). Ferrari played a key role in the imbroglio over the solution to cubic equations, which pitted his mentor against Tartaglia (1499-1557). With Cardano, Ferrari discovered that Scipione dal Ferro (1465-1526), and not Tartaglia, had been the first to find the solution to the depressed cubic, itself a principal element in solving cubic equations. Later, Ferrari brought an end to the heated disputes between the two older mathematicians by soundly defeating Tartaglia in a 1548 public competition in Milan. As a result of his victory, Ferrari received a series of prominent appointments, but was poisoned in 1565, possibly by his own sister.