

Today in Math History...

-19 October 1965

The London Times reports that an archaeologist has located what he believes to be the tomb of Archimedes.

Archimedes of Syracuse (287—212 BC) was an ancient Greek mathematician, physicist, and engineer. Although little is known about his life, he is regarded as one of the most important scientist in classical antiquity. In addition to making important discoveries in the field of mathematics and geometry, he is credited with producing machines that were well ahead of their time.

Some of his mathematical proofs involve the use of infinitesimals in a way that is similar to modern integral calculus. By assuming a proposition to be true and showing that this would lead to a contradiction, Archimedes was able to give answers to problems to an arbitrary degree of accuracy, while specifying the limits within which the answer lay.

*This technique is known as the **method of exhaustion**, and he employed it to approximate the value of π .*

