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Adrien-Marie Legendre

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Adrien-Marie Legendre (1752 - 1833) French mathematician, perhaps best known for the Legendre symbol. Born into wealth, he studied physics in Paris and later taught at a military academy because he liked to teach and not because he needed the money. His earliest work in physics concerned the trajectories of cannonballs. As he moved more towards mathematics, he made major contributions to the study of elliptic integrals.

In the French Revolution, Legendre lost his money. His *Éléments de Géométrie* was a lucrative book and was much reprinted and translated, but it was his various teaching positions and pensions that kept him at an acceptable standard of living. A mistake in office politics in 1824 led to the loss of his pension and he lived the rest of his years in poverty.

Two streets in Paris are named after Legendre as well as a lunar crater.