

Debating Newtonianism in France, England and Italy. Emilie Du Châtelet's Critique of James Jurin

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Abstract. Niccolo Guicciardini has drawn attention to 'the surprisingly complex web of relationships' connecting the Geneva edition of Newton's *Principia mathematica* and scientific circles across Europe. In this paper I trace a skein of that web which interconnects France, London and Italy, by examining the brief correspondence between Emilie Du Châtelet (1706–1749) and James Jurin (1684-1750) (sometime secretary of the Royal Society, London). Their letter-exchange was animated by Du Châtelet's critique of Jurin's 'Achilles argument' against *forces vives* in her *Institutions de physique*. The subsequent publication of Du Châtelet's critique in Italy in 1747, through the good offices of Père Jacquier, is indicative of both of the complexities of scientific interconnections and the issues reverberating across the republic of scientific letters between the publication of the Geneva edition and the completion of Du Châtelet's French translation of Newton's *Principia mathematica*.

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