

Likewise, Fermat's challenge problem to European mathematicians, which remained unsolved for long (and was eventually solved by Euler) is taken from an explicitly solved example in Bhaskara's *Bījagaṇita* (87, Colebrooke 1816, pp. 176–178). Indeed, Bhaskara himself poses it as a challenge, saying “Declare it friend if the method [of solution] be spread over your mind like a creeper”.) Thus, in Feb 1657, Fermat (*Ouvres*, p. 332 et seq.) asked European mathematicians to solve the problem $Nx^2 + 1 = y^2$ for a given (positive, non-square) N . As examples, he listed, for the case $N = 3$, that $x = 1, y = 2$ are solutions, and $x = 4, y = 7$ are also solutions. Then he asked for the smallest integer solutions for the case $N = 61$, and $N = 109$. This is today called “Pell's equation”, and the smallest solutions are the numbers $x = 226153980$, $y = 1766319049$ given by Bhaskara II centuries earlier. Given how large these numbers are, an independent rediscovery would represent a fantastic coincidence.