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### **Einstein and Besso: Not a Partnership of Equals**

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In the 1905 special relativity paper Einstein famously acknowledged the help of his friend and colleague Michele Besso. Besso had been an ideal sounding board for Einstein's ideas. During the years that Einstein developed general relativity, Besso was a good deal more than a sounding board. He collaborated with Einstein on calculations of the perihelion motion of Mercury in 1913. His contributions were substantial and would have warranted co-authorship of Einstein's famous paper on Mercury's perihelion of November 1915, in which Besso is not mentioned at all. Besso also alerted Einstein to problems with the early version of general relativity that Einstein had worked out together with Marcel Grossmann. Einstein essentially ignored Besso's warnings. In addition, Besso went out of his way during this period to act as a mediator between a not always appreciative Einstein, living in Berlin with his cousin Elsa who would become his second wife, and his estranged first wife Mileva, living in Zurich with the couple's two young sons. This period is much better documented than the period leading up to the 1905 paper and consequently much more revealing about the nature of the relationship between Einstein and Besso.