History and Philosophy of Modern Mathematics (Minnesota Studies in the Philosophy of Science)
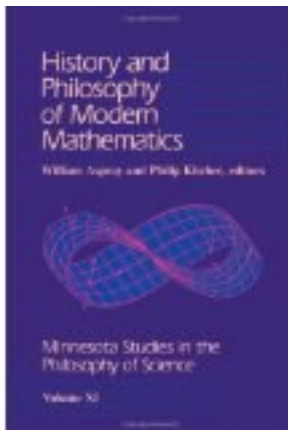

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The fourteen essays in this volume build on the pioneering effort of Garrett Birkhoff, professor of mathematics at Harvard University, who in 1974 organized a conference of mathematicians and historians of modern mathematics to examine how the two disciplines approach the history of mathematics. In History and Philosophy of Modern Mathematics, William Aspray and Philip Kitcher bring together distinguished scholars from mathematics, history, and philosophy to assess the current state of the field. Their essays, which grow out of a 1985 conference at the University of Minnesota, develop the basic premise that mathematical thought needs to be studied from an interdisciplinary perspective.

The opening essays study issues arising within logic and the foundations of mathematics, a traditional area of interest to historians and philosophers. The second section examines issues in the history of mathematics within the framework of established historical periods and questions. Next come case studies that illustrate the power of an interdisciplinary approach to the study of mathematics. The collection closes with a look at mathematics from a sociohistorical perspective, including the way institutions affect what constitutes mathematical knowledge.

作者介绍:

Philip Kitcher is a professor of philosophy at Columbia University.

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