



Mathematical Knowledge and the Interplay of Practices

José Ferreirós

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This book presents a new approach to the epistemology of mathematics by viewing mathematics as a human activity whose knowledge is intimately linked with practice. Charting an exciting new direction in the philosophy of mathematics, José Ferreirós uses the crucial idea of a continuum to provide an account of the development of mathematical knowledge that reflects the actual experience of doing math and makes sense of the perceived objectivity of mathematical results.

Describing a historically oriented, agent-based philosophy of mathematics, Ferreirós shows how the mathematical tradition evolved from Euclidean geometry to the real numbers and set-theoretic structures. He argues for the need to take into account a whole web of mathematical and other practices that are learned and linked by agents, and whose interplay acts as a constraint. Ferreirós demonstrates how advanced mathematics, far from being a priori, is based on hypotheses, in contrast to elementary math, which has strong cognitive and practical roots and therefore enjoys certainty.

Offering a wealth of philosophical and historical insights, *Mathematical Knowledge and the Interplay of Practices* challenges us to rethink some of our most basic assumptions about mathematics, its objectivity, and its relationship to culture and science.

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