Revue d'Histoire des Mathématiques

Journal for the History of Mathematics

REVUE D'HISTOIRE DES MATHÉMATIQUES

EDITORIAL

This issue of the *Revue d'histoire des mathématiques / Journal for the History of Mathematics*, the last one for which I write an editorial in my capacity as editor-in-chief, presents a great variety of approaches. In the first paper, the authors Jaume Paradís, Josep Pla and Pelegrí Viader offer a mathematical interpretation of the methods used by Pierre de Fermat in the second part of his famous *Treatise on quadrature*, methods that have thus far remained obscure to commentators. The note written by M. Céu Silva and Antoni Malet, that closes the volume, describes a bibliographical rarity, a practical geometry from sixteenth century Spain which is virtually unknown to historians of mathematics. A philosophical approach is prevalent in the other two papers: Anouk Barberousse uses writings by Émile Borel to analyze the role of approximation in scientific representations of reality. Finally, Pierre Cassou-Noguès studies unpublished notes by Kurt Gödel in order to show that Gödel's critique of Turing's thesis stems from Gödel's somewhat ambiguous interpretation of Turing's work.

Since 1998 when I succeeded Christian Gilain as editor-in-chief of the *Revue d'histoire des mathématiques / Journal for the History of Mathematics*, the journal has undergone significant scientific and editorial changes. Disciplinary histories have declined relative to a history of science concerned with transversal themes like the validation of results by scientific communities, the circulation of results established locally, forms of communication, the study of scientific controversies, the role of diagrams, etc. The history of mathematics must now open itself to these newer themes. This is one of the challenges the journal will face in the near future: it will have to participate more aggressively in debates in the history of science and open itself more to the human sciences, without, however, neglecting its roots in mathematics.

The journal will also have to confront the challenges presented by innovations in digital publishing; these impose their own editorial and organizational forms. Thanks to the know-how of the Société mathématique de France, the *Revue d'histoire des mathématiques / Journal for the History of Mathematics* has been able to keep pace with these technological innovations, as a glance at the journal on-line shows. But the loss of the materiality brings in its wake important changes in validation procedures and diffusion. Today, we are confronted with multiple versions of one paper; these may be read on-line before the publication of a version that has been accepted by

referees belonging to or chosen by an editorial board. Evaluation procedures will thus inevitably change. Similarly, reading practices will change as readers will be able to select on the web a single paper of interest (and choose the version most easily accessible). This kind of selective reading will have consequences for the diffusion of a journal like ours; it will be available at portals offering the numerous bundled journals to which our institutions subscribe globally. The *Revue d'histoire des mathématiques / Journal for the History of Mathematics* will have to adapt to these new and quickly changing practices.

I am confident that Norbert Schappacher, who has agreed to take over at the journal's helm, will show inventiveness and bring about the innovations needed for the journal's further development. I wish him the best of luck in this noble but difficult task, and I pledge him my complete support of the structural changes which will be necessary.

Finally, I thank the successive editorial boards with which I had the pleasure to collaborate over the last decade. Their evaluation of and follow-up on papers submitted for publication have made the *Revue d'histoire des mathématiques / Journal for the History of Mathematics* the valuable tool for research and communication that it has become today. They also helped the journal attain the place it enjoys in the international arena, a place, however, that must be secured in this period in which bureaucrats attempt to seal the fate of our publications by arbitrarily ranking journals in the absence of clearly articulated or properly followed criteria. My special thanks also go to Karen Parshall who, despite her various engagements all well known to our community, has carefully read and revised my English texts as well as those of the journal's authors, and to Nathalie Christiaën, of the French Mathematical Society, whose dynamism and unfailing support sustained me throughout our collaboration.

Jeanne Peiffer