



The Shaping of Deduction in Greek Mathematics: A Study in Cognitive History (Ideas in Context)

Reviel Netz

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The aim of this book is to explain the shape of Greek mathematical thinking. It can be read on three levels: as a description of the practices of Greek mathematics; as a theory of the emergence of the deductive method; and as a case-study for a general view on the history of science. The starting point for the enquiry is geometry and the lettered diagram. Reviel Netz exploits the mathematicians' practices in the construction and lettering of their diagrams, and the continuing interaction between text and diagram in their proofs, to illuminate the underlying cognitive processes. A close examination of the mathematical use of language follows, especially mathematicians' use of repeated formulae. Two crucial chapters set out to show how mathematical proofs are structured and explain why Greek mathematical practice manages to be so satisfactory. A final chapter looks into the broader historical setting of Greek mathematical practice.

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