ℵ Modern Logic ω

Perspectives on the History of Mathematical Logic, ed. Thomas Drucker, Birkhäuser, Boston-Basel-Berlin 1991, xxiv+195 pp.

Reviewed by

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This book is a collection of papers most of which were originally given in the special session on the History of Logic at the American Mathematical Society's meeting in Chicago in March 1985 (the papers included in the volume but not presented in the session are those by Dawson, Seldin, Wang and a second paper by Anellis). The volume is dedicated to the memory of Jean van Heijenoort. It fittingly begins with a short paper by Irving H. Anellis presenting van Heijenoort and his contributions to the history of logic.

The main part of the book opens with an Introduction written by the editor, Thomas Drucker. It contains a description of the included papers and the main principles around which the book is organized.

The papers are devoted to the history of mathematical logic in the last century. They do not give a complete history of this discipline but indicate some crucial points in its development and the richness of some of its ideas. As the editor writes in the Introduction: "They [the papers] involve technical details and philosophical underpinnings, support of colleagues and establishment of chairs. Some of the chapters give an insider's view of a particular development in the field, while others are detailed critical analyses of influential pieces of work. Their .common feature is making sense rather than magic out of advances, binding together a community of contributors rather than leaving the impression of isolated wonder-workers. As the motto of the international chess federation has it, *Gens una sumus.* (We are one people.)" (p. xvi)

The first paper is Judy Green's, "The Problem of Elimination in the Algebra of Logic" focussing on the discussion of the contributions of Boole, Venn, Ladd-Franklin and others to the solution of the elimination problem. This problem concerns the elimination of a logical variable from an equation or set of equations and is connected with the problem of recognition of valid syllogisms. The paper also offers the reader several important references to the relevant literature.

Describing an early contribution to mathematical logic is the paper "Peirce and the Law of Distribution" by Nathan Houser. It is based on the author's study of materials from the