

William Ewald,  
“Hilbert’s Wide Program”,  
in René Cori, Alexander Razborov, Stevo Todorčević, and Carol Wood  
(editors), *Logic Colloquium 2000, Proceedings of the Annual European  
Summer Meeting of the Association for Symbolic Logic, held in Paris,  
France, 23-31, 2000* (Wellesley, MA: Association for Symbolic Logic/A  
K Peters, Ltd., 2000), pp. 228-251.  
424 pp. ISBN 1568812523

## REVIEW

IRVING H. ANELLIS

This is a study in history of philosophy of logic. Its author rejects the received view that Hilbert had no sustained interest in philosophy and foundations of mathematics, but was goaded into undertaking his foundational excursions by the “crisis” in mathematics precipitated by the Russell paradox and the debates on foundations which consequently emerged between logicism, formalism, and intuitionism. Ewald also opposes the contention of the received view, that the Hilbert program was specifically and explicitly a response to the Russell paradox, and he adduces evidence from Hilbert’s lectures and lecture notes, in support of his opposition to the contentions of the received view. What follows is not a study of the history of logic and foundations; nor is it a discussion of the technical aspects of the Hilbert program. It is *not* history of logic and foundations. It *is* history of philosophy of logic and foundations, examining, in large measure upon the basis of the Hilbert *Nachlaß*, the chronology of the motivation, origin and development of the Hilbert program.

Ewald’s thesis in this article is that the traditional perception of Hilbert as a mathematician focused exclusively on problem solving and with little or no interest in philosophical or foundational issues at best, is misguided.

This perception is to be attributed initially to Otto Blumenthal and his biography of Hilbert, in which the emphasis is first of all on Hilbert’s list of unsolved problems [Hilbert 1900] and to Blumenthal’s account