Mathematical Works Printed In The Americas 1554-1700: A Diverse Collection of Intellectual Achievements

Mathematics, an essential discipline in human civilization, has a rich and diverse history. From ancient times to the present day, countless mathematicians and scholars have contributed to the development of this field. While Europe is often celebrated as the cradle of mathematical achievements, it is intriguing to explore mathematical works printed in the Americas between 1554 and 1700. This epoch witnessed a remarkable exchange of knowledge between the Old and New Worlds. The Johns Hopkins Studies in Mathematical History offer invaluable insights into this intriguing period of intellectual exploration.

The Emergence of Mathematical Works in the Americas

The age of exploration and colonization significantly impacted the intellectual landscape of the Americas. European explorers and settlers brought with them their cultural and scientific traditions, including mathematics. With the establishment of printing presses across the Americas, it became possible to disseminate knowledge and foster intellectual curiosity on a vast scale.

A Diverse Collection of Mathematical Works

The collection of mathematical works printed in the Americas between 1554 and 1700 is astonishingly diverse. From treatises on arithmetic and algebra to seminal works on geometry and calculus, these publications encapsulate the advancement of math in the New World. Some works delve into practical applications, such as surveying and navigation, while others focus on theoretical explorations.



Mathematical Works Printed in the Americas, 1554–1700 (Johns Hopkins Studies in the History of Mathematics)

by Bruce Stanley Burdick(Annotated Edition, Kindle Edition)

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Noteworthy Figures and Their Contributions

Several prominent figures emerge from this collection of mathematical works. One such figure is Pedro Nunes, a Portuguese mathematician whose treatise on navigation played a vital role in advancing the science of sailing during the Age of Exploration. Nunes' application of mathematics to the study of navigation significantly increased the accuracy and safety of sea voyages, revolutionizing global exploration and trade.

Another influential mathematician from this era is Girolamo Saccheri. His work on geometry, specifically his investigations into the parallel postulate, laid the groundwork for the development of non-Euclidean geometry. Saccheri's contributions challenged long-held assumptions and opened up new possibilities within the field of mathematics.

The Significance of Mathematical Works in the Americas

The mathematical works printed in the Americas between 1554 and 1700 hold immense historical and intellectual significance. They represent the adaptation and application of European mathematical knowledge to the unique challenges and opportunities of the New World. These publications highlight the intellectual exchange between the continents and contribute to a broader understanding of the shared intellectual heritage of humanity.

Exploring the Johns Hopkins Studies in Mathematical History

The Johns Hopkins Studies in Mathematical History provide an unparalleled opportunity to delve deeper into this fascinating period. Their comprehensive collection of mathematical works printed in the Americas between 1554 and 1700 offers a treasure trove of intellectual discoveries waiting to be explored. From rare manuscripts to beautifully preserved printed editions, these works reveal the ambition and dedication of scholars in the Americas during this transformative period.

Mathematical works printed in the Americas between 1554 and 1700 offer a captivating glimpse into a thriving intellectual community. The diversity of topics, the contributions of influential figures, and the historical significance of these works make them an invaluable resource for researchers, historians, and math enthusiasts alike. The Johns Hopkins Studies in Mathematical History serve as a gateway to explore this era, shedding light on the rich and often underestimated mathematical heritage of the Americas.

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This magisterial annotated bibliography of the earliest mathematical works to be printed in the New World challenges long-held assumptions about the earliest examples of American mathematical endeavor. Bruce Stanley Burdick brings together mathematical writings from Mexico, Lima, and the English colonies of Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, and New York. The book provides important information such as author, printer, place of publication, and location of original copies of each of the works discussed.

Burdick's exhaustive research has unearthed numerous examples of books not previously cataloged as mathematical. While it was thought that no mathematical writings in English were printed in the Americas before 1703, Burdick gives scholars one of their first chances to discover Jacob Taylor's 1697 Tenebrae, a treatise on solving triangles and other figures using basic trigonometry. He also goes beyond the English language to discuss works in Spanish and Latin, such as Alonso de la Vera Cruz's 1554 logic text, the Recognitio Summularum; a book on astrology by Enrico Martínez; books on the nature of comets by Carlos de Sigüenza y Góngora and Eusebio Francisco Kino; and a 1676 almanac by Feliciana Ruiz, the first woman to produce a mathematical work in the Americas.

Those fascinated by mathematics, its history, and its culture will note with interest that many of these works, including all of the earliest ones, are from Mexico, not from what is now the United States. As such, the book will challenge us to rethink the history of mathematics on the American continents.



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