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Pepe, Luigi

Towards rigour. The manuals of calculus in 19th century Italy.

Brizzi, Gian Paolo (ed.) et al., Dalla pecia all'e-book. Libri per l'Università: stampa, editoria, circolazione e lettura. Atti del convegno internazionale di studi. Bologna, Italy, 21-25 ottobre 2008. Bologna: Casa Editrice Clueb (ISBN 978-88-491-3252-6/pbk). Studi. Centro Interuniversitario per la Storia delle Università Italiane 11, 393-413 (2009).

The article follows the stepwise introduction of rigour in Italian calculus as reflected in university manuals, from the 18th century until the end of the 19th century. It is shown how the manuals of the early part of the period (when the field was named "calcolo sublime") would not only build on slightly older or contemporary French models but also directly on the 17th-century classics. Gradually, the inspirations from Cauchy would displace this orientation; from the 1860s onward, inspiration from German mathematicians, from Riemann to the Weierstrass school, took over.

The article is richly illustrated by extensive quotations from participants in the process and contemporary witnesses.

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