

Dugac, Pierre

Jean Dieudonné: Universal mathematician. (Jean Dieudonné: Mathématicien complet.)
(French) [Zbl 0907.01040](#)

Plus de Lumière. Sceaux: Éditions Jacques Gabay. iv, 157 p. (1995).

This is a short biography of the universal (“complet”) French mathematician and cofounder of Bourbaki, Jean Dieudonné (1906-1992), by his colleague and friend, the historian of mathematics Pierre Dugac. Partly following Dieudonné’s own stipulations in his last will, Dugac is short on Dieudonné’s mathematical contributions, stressing his work on complete topological spaces and Lie groups. Instead, Dugac focuses on Dieudonné’s work as a historian of mathematics, emphasizing the importance of his books on the ‘History of functional analysis’ (1981; [Zbl 0478.46001](#)) and the ‘History of algebraic and differential topology 1900-1960’ (1989; [Zbl 0673.55002](#)). Dugac’s booklet uses extensive quotations from Dieudonné’s articles, review papers and unpublished letters, thereby giving only sparse commentary by the author, mostly on related matters from the history of mathematics. Dugac shows Dieudonné’s predilection for “pure” mathematics and aesthetic considerations, as well as the rôle that generalized intuition played in his work.

As to Dieudonné’s philosophical and political opinions, Dugac gives examples of Dieudonné’s French patriotism in mathematics (as opposed to allegedly “unmotivated” American work of the 1950s), of Dieudonné’s resentments against certain work in the foundations (nonstandard analysis) and of Dieudonné’s philosophical and religious indifferentism.

On the example of Dieudonné’s biography the reader gains also valuable insights into the one-sidedness of French mathematics in the 1920s, which was strong in analysis but had to learn algebra from the Germans and topology from the Russians and the Polish. The booklet is concluded by a collection of portraits of Dieudonné, his family and his collaborators.

Reviewer: [R.Siegmund-Schultze \(Berlin\)](#)

MSC:

[01A70](#) Biographies, obituaries, personalia, bibliographies

[01A60](#) History of mathematics in the 20th century

Cited in **2** Documents

Keywords:

[Dieudonné as historian](#); [French mathematics](#)

Biographic references:

[Dieudonné, Jean](#)