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Título: James Joseph Sylvester: Jewish Mathematician In a Victorian World

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Honorable Mention Winner in the Biography & Autobiography category of the Professional and Scholarly Publishing Awards given by the Association of American Publishers

Here, in this first biographical study of James Joseph Sylvester, Karen Hunger Parshall makes a signal contribution to the history of mathematics, Victorian history, and the history of science.

A brilliant Cambridge student at first denied a degree because of his faith, Sylvester came twice to America to teach mathematics, ultimately becoming one of Daniel Coit Gilman's faculty recruits at Johns Hopkins in 1876 and winning the coveted Savilian Professorship of Geometry at Oxford in 1883. He held professorships of natural philosophy, worked as an actuary, was called to the bar, and taught mathematics to cadets training for engineering and artillery posts in the British Army. During his long, distinguished career he also edited England's Quarterly Journal of Pure and Applied Mathematics and established the American Journal of Mathematics, the first sustained mathematics research journal in the United States.

Situating Sylvester's life within the political, religious, mathematical, and social currents of nineteenth-century England, Parshall penetrates the myth of this venerated figure, revealing how he lived, the choices he made and why, how the world in which he lived affected him—and how he affected that world. The story of Sylvester's life sheds light on the evolution of mathematical thought. It also examines the ways in which mathematics may be done and what factors may shape a mathematician's ideas. Parshall explores the development of academic professionalization, nineteenth-century mathematical culture, and the emergence of modern algebra as a mathematical discipline. She highlights the human side of what many view as that most arcane and otherworldly of intellectual endeavors, mathematics, which indeed answers to such diverse factors as religion, ego, and depression.

"Working from an impressive knowledge of relevant archival sources, Parshall has written a tale

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so engaging that I did not want to put it down. As the story both of the man in his times and the mathematician with his work, it is a fascinating read for those interested in the Victorian era, the history and development of academic disciplines, and the history of mathematics."_Joan Richards, Brown University

"A masterful biography."_American Scientist

"An important and impressively documented contribution to the history of nineteenth-century mathematics."_Craig G. Fraser, Mathematical Reviews

"A thoroughly enjoyable read."_J. W. Anderson, The London Mathematical Society Newsletter

"This is an exceptional example of scholarly research."_Gail Kaplan, Convergence

"Parshall has already established herself as a leading expert on Sylvester and his milieu, carefully reconstructing the trajectory of Sylvester's professional life on the basis of copious documentary evidence, describing Sylvester's more important mathematical results in his career context, and writing for broad audiences with no detailed mathematical exposition or technical analysis of Sylvester's mathematics... Highly recommended."_Choice

"A well-written and thorough account of its subject... a wealth of useful and well-researched information that is difficult to find elsewhere."_Robin Wilson, Historia Mathematica

"This well-written, thoroughly researched biography will become the definitive study of Sylvester."_Jeremy Gray, British Journal for the History of Science