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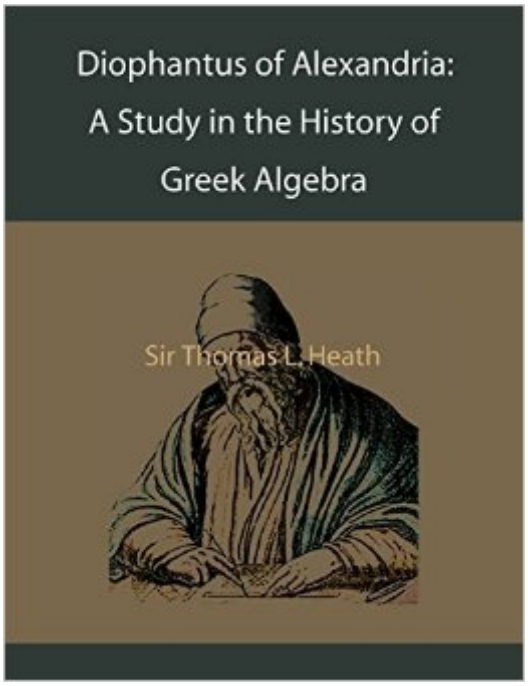
Diophantus Of Alexandria: A Study In The History Of Greek Algebra



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Synopsis

Reprint of Cambridge University press edition of 1910. Paperback. 387 pp. Diophantus of Alexandria, sometimes called "the father of algebra", was an Alexandrian mathematician and the author of a series of books called Arithmetica. These texts deal with solving algebraic equations, many of which are now lost. In studying Arithmetica, Pierre de Fermat concluded that a certain equation considered by Diophantus had no solutions, and noted without elaboration that he had found "a truly marvelous proof of this proposition," now referred to as Fermat's Last Theorem. This led to tremendous advances in number theory, and the study of diophantine equations ("diophantine geometry") and of diophantine approximations remain important areas of mathematical research. Diophantus was the first Greek mathematician who recognized fractions as numbers; thus he allowed positive rational numbers for the coefficients and solutions. In modern use, diophantine equations are usually algebraic equations with integer coefficients, for which integer solutions are sought. Diophantus also made advances in mathematical notation. Heath's work is one of the standard books in the field.

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A treasury of early algebraic techniques with wonderful commentary and chapters in later advances in number theory, particulary Fermat.

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