Zbl 1086.01017

Deschauer, Stefan; Rheticus, Georg Joachim

The arithmetic lecture of Georg Joachim Rheticus, Wittenberg 1536. A commented edition of the manuscript X-278 (8) of the Estonian Academic Library. (Die Arithmetik-Vorlesung des Georg Joachim Rheticus, Wittenberg 1536. Eine kommentierte Edition der Handschrift X-278 (8) der Estnischen Akademischen Bibliothek.) (German, Latin)

Algorismus 42; Münchener Universitätsschriften. Augsburg: ERV Dr. Erwin Rauner Verlag. 197 p. EUR 15.20 (2003).

This newly discovered manuscript shows that Rheticus used Peurbach's *Elements of Arithmetic* as a textbook for his arithmetic lectures. The manuscript provides annotations, additions and examples–Peurbach's text contains almost no exemplifications. Rheticus follows Peurbach in the explanation of how to use the Arabic numerals and of the six basic arithmetical operations (addition, subtraction, duplation, mediation, multiplication and division; Rheticus places mediation before duplation), whereas his presentation of operations with fractions and of the rule of three are his own (both include composite metrological expressions). He omits Peurbach's arithmetical and geometrical progressions, the calculation of square roots, comparison of and arithmetical operations with fractions, the inverse and composite rule of three, partnership and the rule of false. Rheticus' teaching in Wittenberg thus involves much less than Rheticus' of that material which not only the German *Rechenmeister* but also German university scholars like Wolack and Widman had taken over from the Italian abbacus tradition; indeed, Rheticus is conservative when compared to Peurbach even in his presentation of the numerals and closer to traditional Latin algorismus.

Deschauer's edition confronts a facsimile reproduction with a line-to-line transcription. It is followed by a German translation combined with an excellent commentary, a terminological index, explanation of metrologies and a name index. An appendix contains a facsimile of a page from the Peurbach text (with annotations from the same hand that wrote down Rheticus' lectures) and a Preface to arithmetic from Rheticus' hand, also from 1536 and published in Melanchton's *Opera omnia*.

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Keywords : Rheticus; Peurbach; Practical arithmetic; Renaissance

Classification :

    ∗01A40 Mathematics in the 15th and 16th centuries, Renaissance