

Preface

This volume is the second in a series of translations of selected mathematical articles published in the Russian magazine “Kvant” (meaning “Quantum”) since 1970. American Mathematical Society will continue to publish a number of volumes a year for several years to come. The papers are subdivided into three categories: algebra and analysis, geometry and topology, discrete mathematics (the present volume, as well as the previous one, belongs to the first). The reader interested in the history of “Kvant” is referred to the Preface in the first volume.

The articles were written for high school students, and no substantial background knowledge of mathematics is needed to understand them. However, the reader should not expect “an easy ride”: these articles contain nontrivial material, and one should be prepared to work with paper and pencil at hand and return to difficult places more than once. We are sure that an industrious reader will be generously rewarded by the elegance and beauty of the subject.

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