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Titolo	A historian looks back : the calculus as algebra and selected writings / / by Judith V. Grabiner [[electronic resource]]
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Nota di contenuto	The calculus as algebra -- The mathematician, the historian, and the history of mathematics -- Who gave you the epsilon? Cauchy and the origins of rigorous calculus -- The changing concept of change: the derivative from Fermat to Weierstrass -- The centrality of mathematics in the history of western thought -- Descartes and problem-solving -- The calculus as algebra, the calculus as geometry: Lagrange, Maclaurin, and their legacy -- Was Newton's calculus a dead end? the continental influence of Maclaurin's treatise of fluxions -- Newton, Maclaurin, and the authority of mathematics -- Why should historical truth matter to mathematicians? dispelling myths while promoting maths -- Why did Lagrange "prove" the parallel postulate?
Sommario/riassunto	Judith Grabiner, the author of A Historian Looks Back, has long been interested in investigating what mathematicians actually do, and how mathematics actually has developed. She addresses the results of her investigations not principally to other historians, but to mathematicians and teachers of mathematics. This book brings together much of what she has had to say to this audience. The centerpiece of the book is The Calculus as Algebra: J.-L. Lagrange, 1736-1813. The book describes the achievements, setbacks, and influence of Lagrange's pioneering attempt to reduce the calculus to algebra. Nine additional articles round out the book describing the history of the derivative; the origin of delta-epsilon proofs; Descartes and problem solving; the

contrast between the calculus of Newton and Maclaurin, and that of Lagrange; Maclaurin's way of doing mathematics and science and his surprisingly important influence; some widely held 'myths' about the history of mathematics; Lagrange's attempt to prove Euclid's parallel postulate; and the central role that mathematics has played throughout the history of western civilization.
