

Mathematics and War

Bernhelm Booß-Bavnbek, Jens Høyrup (Eds.)

This book gives a broad picture of the increasingly intimate intercourse of the world of weapons with that of theorems. It shows to what extent the military has played an active part in the shaping of modern mathematics and the careers of mathematicians, in particular since World War II. It investigates how mathematical thinking, mathematical methods, and mathematically supported technology are now about to change the character and performance of modern warfare, and how this influences the public as well as the military. It describes the ethical choices of outstanding individuals like the physicist Niels Bohr and the mathematician Alan Turing in times of war and addresses the question to what extent general ethical discussions can provide guidance for working mathematicians. Finally, it analyzes the role of mathematical thinking in shaping the modern international law of war and peace and the role of mathematical arguments in support for actual conflict resolution.

The volume is the first of its kind. It is based on lectures presented at a conference, held in August 2002 at the Blekinge Institute of Technology at Karlskrona (Sweden), gathering mathematicians, historians of mathematics, historians of war, military analysts, and philosophers. The contributions are from eight countries (Denmark, Germany, Japan, Norway, Russia, Sweden, United Kingdom, USA).

The volume provides careful expositions of new perspectives on the interaction between mathematics and the military together with introductions to currently active areas of military and ethical thinking and to ongoing research in the recent history of mathematics. Material presented in the book may be used as a foundation for courses on social issues of mathematics and professional perspectives in the mathematics curriculum and for ethics classes in military education and political sciences.

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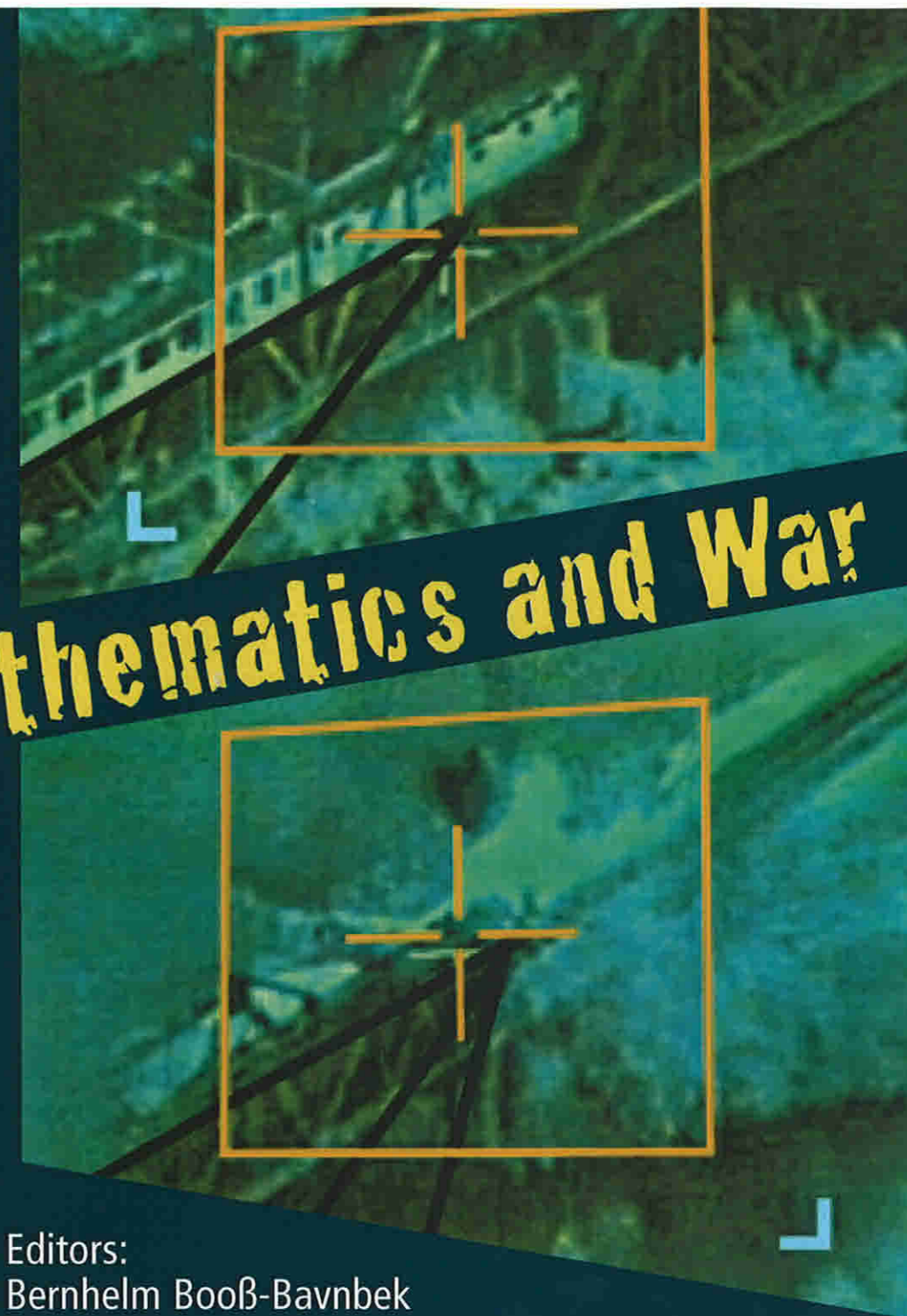
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