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CORRIGENDUM TO "IN MEMORIAM: WALTER FELSCHER, 1931–2000"

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Quote from my orbituary [1]:

> In the first books another aspect is worth mentioning: historical precision. I remember a typical episode: The two editions of Dedekind's book "Was sind und was sollen die Zahlen?" differed in some respects; the second one contained a passage that could have been copied by Dedekind from Bolzano. Walter Felscher went to the Mathematics library in Braunschweig and looked in the archives of the 19th century and it was in fact recorded that Dedekind had read the relevant writing of Bolzano at the time in question.

Wilfried Sieg from CMU pointed out to me that two types of corrections are appropriate: 1) Felscher's remark should not refer to the two editions of Dedekind's book but rather to the book and some earlier writings of Dedekind. 2) The reader might get the impression that Dedekind did some kind of plagiarism.

I would like to point that this was definitely not intended. I included the episode because it was characteristic for Felscher's attitudes. The background and context was the following: Walter Felscher was dealing with the questions I referred to in his book *Naive Mengen und abstrakte Zahlen*, Volume 1 on page 148. There he states that in Dedekind 1888 there is the statement "There exist infinite systems", in fact , Dedekind triples, and the beginning of Dedekind's proof for this statement is repeated. Then Felscher quotes Dugac 1976 (*Richard Dedekind et les fondements des mathematique*) who pointed out that Dedekind here repeats an argument of Bolzano 1851 (*Paradoxien des Unendlichen*). This argument is stated there and mentioned that this is a non-mathematical argument of a type that one does not find at any other place in Dedekind (in particular not in his earlier writing, as I add) and that can be translated onto a mathematical argument. The episode which I quoted took place later was an oral communication and was not written down anywhere, to my knowledge. Wilfried Sieg brought some facts to my attention that I did not know. He pointed out that Dugac (whom he otherwise estimates highly) is in the group of researchers who state without

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real proofs that Dedekind has taken over the proof of the existence of infinite systems from Bolzano. He gives several detailed arguments how these researchers supported their argument and why these are very weak arguments and he mentioned that these researchers did not read several other sources of relevance. Obviously Felscher was among these researchers.

This shows that Dedekind did was far from taking over arguments from Bolzano. In fact, Dedekind added something new and very relevant to Bolzano.

REFERENCES

[1] MICHAEL RICHTER, *In memoriam: Walter Felscher, 1931–2000*, this BULLETIN, vol. 9 (2003), no. 3, pp. 417–418.

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