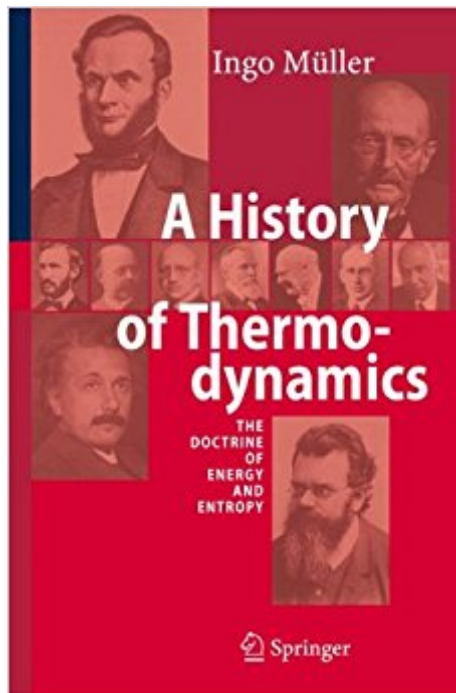




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A History Of Thermodynamics: The Doctrine Of Energy And Entropy



Synopsis

This book offers an easy to read, all-embracing history of thermodynamics. It describes the long development of thermodynamics, from the misunderstood and misinterpreted to the conceptually simple and extremely useful theory that we know today. Coverage identifies not only the famous physicists who developed the field, but also engineers and scientists from other disciplines who helped in the development and spread of thermodynamics as well.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Had this book been marketed as, say, "an august scientist's rambling [or 'delightful', as publishers say] and highly personal musings on the history of his field," and had it been given a more poetic title, an innocent reader would have been able to approach it with due caution. However, it was not, and I took the title at face value. Judging the book by that standard, it's a self-indulgent and amateurish scientific history. The author, Prof. Dr. rer. nat. Dr. h.c. Ingo Mueller (IM), a physicist and emeritus professor at the Technical University of Berlin, either grossly underestimated what's involved in professional historical scholarship, or was too delighted with his own opinions to care. On the plus side, the book includes coverage of 20th Century topics like irreversible processes (IrrP) and relativistic thermodynamics, whereas many histories of thermodynamics (TD) end sometime around 1905-ish or sooner. (However, coverage of these topics, while broad, is not deep.) IM also shows a sensitivity to the pragmatic aspects of measuring TD quantities. The discussion of the "kinetic theory of rubber" (@111-117) was one of the most lucid and interesting passages of the book. If you re-set your expectations along the lines of my imagined blurb, you may find the rest of

my comments to be mitigated in whole or in part. But if you're considering this book because your interest is history of physics, here's an abbreviated list of reasons I feel I paid *way* more than this book was worth. A. TONE: There's a tension in this book between (i) writing history and (ii) simply using history as a roadmap for the sequence of topics, which are discussed with modern concepts and notation. IM isn't consistent about these, though he tends to (ii).

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