The Great Mathematicians is a largely chronological account of the development of mathematics from the Ancient Egyptians to the present day. Material is presented in a series of two page spreads, most of which focus on the life and selected achievements of a single mathematician. In the words of the authors: "This book aims to present mathematics with a human face".

It divides the history of mathematics into 5 main areas. *Ancient mathematics* is focussed for the most part on Greek mathematics, but also includes material on Chinese, Indian, Mayan and Arabic mathematics. *Early European mathematics* stretches from Fibonacci to Desargues. *Awakening and Enlightenment* traces the development of mathematics in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. *The Age of Revolutions* begins with Gauss and ends with Klein. Finally, *The Modern Age* is a selection of mathematician from the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, concluding with a discussion of Perelman and the Poincaré conjecture.

The book is attractively bound, and at £9.99, provides a competitively priced nontechnical overview of the development of mathematics. I found the exposition of the first two chapters particularly appealing, but as the book progresses the biographical sketches become thinner and the authors struggle occasionally to present more technical material in an accessible fashion. Thus the coverage of figures such as Gerbert (later Pope Sylvester II) and Recorde (who introduced the ✕ and = signs) appealed greatly to me. I was disappointed, however, by the coverage of Abel and Galois, who share a single spread with a description of the classical problems of doubling the cube, trisecting an angle and squaring the circle. Their stories are related in a telegraphic style, missing out on a golden opportunity to tell two of the more melodramatic stories from the history of mathematics.

While the book contains descriptions and illustrations of a great number and range of mathematical results, it contains relatively few formal proofs, with the notable exception of a presentation of Cantor's diagonal argument on page 165. This is a pity: without proofs it can be difficult to appreciate the elegance of the material that is being presented. These are minor reservations however; the lack of depth in the treatment is counterbalanced by the comprehensive bibliography provided for further reading.

The authors have been successful in providing a comprehensive and non-technical introduction to the great mathematicians of history.

Padraig Ó Catháin.