

**Mandelbrot, Benoît**

**Souvenirs à batons rompus de Szolem Mandelbrojt, recueillis en 1970 et préparés par Benoît Mandelbrot.** (French) [Zbl 0548.01020](#)  
Cah. Sémin. Hist. Math. 6, 1-46 (1985).

This article is in the form of a dialogue between the author and his uncle and the latter is reminiscing about his early life in mathematics. In particular he describes how he first found a method of finding square roots (when he was 14 years old). Even though he knew from his father that it had been done before, for him it was his discovery. He goes on to describe his early studies in mathematics and the people that he met.

One of the most interesting stories is the formation of "Bourbaki" and their method of working. The uncle Szolem Mandelbrojt left "Bourbaki" when the war started in 1939. Essentially he seems to have left because only young men should be in "Bourbaki" or because the work became too abstract. There is an interesting discussion of the word abstract and generalisations which is difficult to follow and which the author finds difficult to follow. He also tells the story of when the name Nicolas Bourbaki was first invented.

He also discusses his work and its relationship to physics. In particular his work on Fourier Transforms where he established the validity of the truncations used by physicists.

Reviewer: [B.Burrows](#)

**MSC:**

[01A70](#) Biographies, obituaries, personalia, bibliographies  
[01A60](#) History of mathematics in the 20th century

**Keywords:**

[Bourbaki](#); [abstraction](#); [generalisations](#); [physics](#); [Fourier Transforms](#)

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