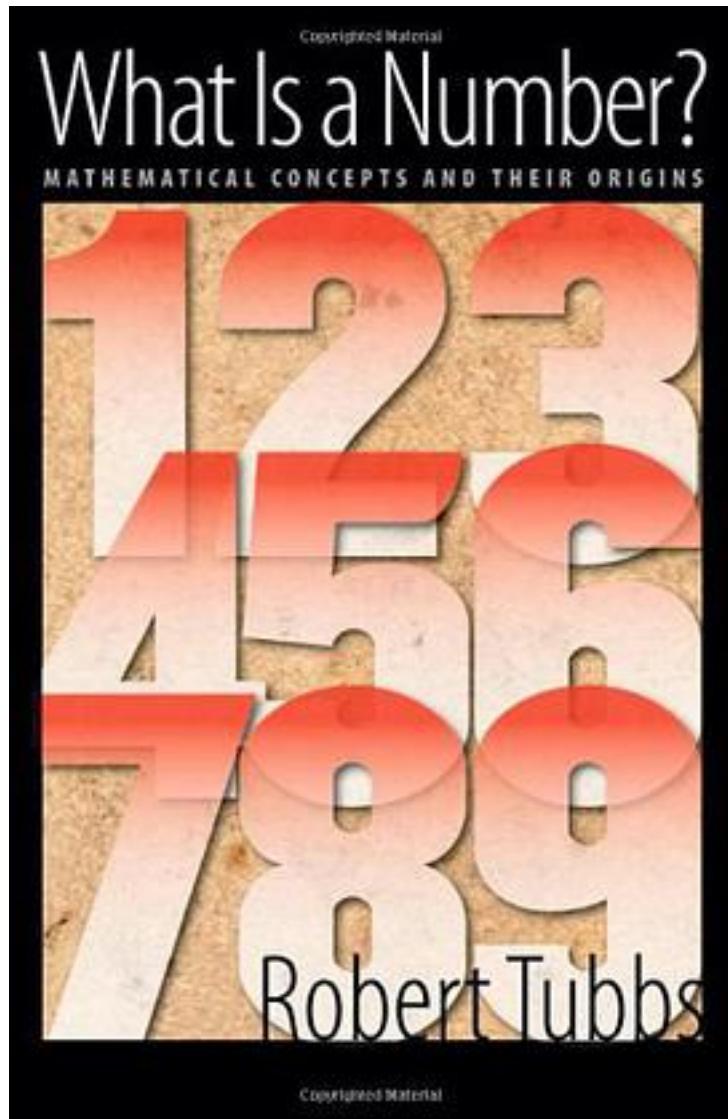


What is a Number?



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出版者:

出版时间:2008-12

装帧:

isbn:9780801890185

Mathematics often seems incomprehensible, a melee of strange symbols thrown down on a page. But while formulae, theorems, and proofs can involve highly complex concepts, the math becomes transparent when viewed as part of a bigger picture. *What Is a Number?* provides that picture. Robert Tubbs examines how mathematical concepts like number, geometric truth, infinity, and proof have been employed by artists, theologians, philosophers, writers, and cosmologists from ancient times to the modern era. Looking at a broad range of topics—from Pythagoras's exploration of the connection between harmonious sounds and mathematical ratios to the understanding of time in both Western and pre-Columbian thought—Tubbs ties together seemingly disparate ideas to demonstrate the relationship between the sometimes elusive thought of artists and philosophers and the concrete logic of mathematicians. He complements his textual arguments with diagrams and illustrations. This historic and thematic study refutes the received wisdom that mathematical concepts are esoteric and divorced from other intellectual pursuits—revealing them instead as dynamic and intrinsic to almost every human endeavor.

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