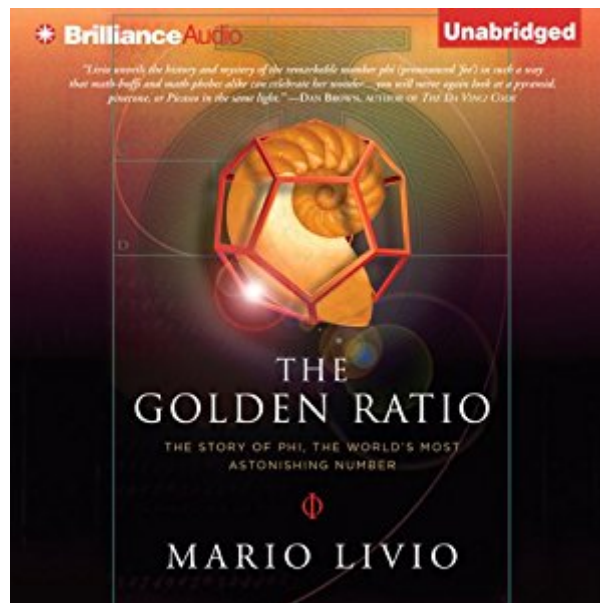




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The Golden Ratio: The Story Of Phi, The World's Most Astonishing Number



Synopsis

Throughout history, thinkers from mathematicians to theologians have pondered the mysterious relationship between numbers and the nature of reality. In this fascinating book, Mario Livio tells the tale of a number at the heart of that mystery: phi, or 1.6180339887.... This curious mathematical relationship, widely known as "The Golden Ratio", was discovered by Euclid more than 2,000 years ago because of its crucial role in the construction of the pentagram, to which magical properties had been attributed. Since then it has shown a propensity to appear in the most astonishing variety of places, from mollusk shells, sunflower florets, and rose petals to the shape of the galaxy.

Psychological studies have investigated whether the Golden Ratio is the most aesthetically pleasing proportion extant, and it has been asserted that the creators of the Pyramids and the Parthenon employed it. It is believed to feature in works of art from Leonardo da Vinci's Mona Lisa to Salvador Dali's The Sacrament of the Last Supper, and poets and composers have used it in their works. It has even been found to be connected to the behavior of the stock market! The Golden Ratio is a captivating journey through art and architecture, botany and biology, physics and mathematics. It tells the human story of numerous phi-fixated individuals, including the followers of Pythagoras who believed that this proportion revealed the hand of God; astronomer Johannes Kepler, who saw phi as the greatest treasure of geometry; such Renaissance thinkers as mathematician Leonardo Fibonacci of Pisa; and such masters of the modern world as Goethe, Cezanne, Bartok, and physicist Roger Penrose. Wherever his quest for the meaning of phi takes him, Mario Livio reveals the world as a place where order, beauty, and eternal mystery will always coexist.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Actually, Mario Livio's "What Makes Us Curious" is becoming my prequel to "The Golden Ratio" (next on my summer reading list). Long story, very short: My curiosity (much more than hobbyist-level math expertise) resulted in discovery of $r\pi$ (impromptu nickname; $r\pi$ = radial π , relating to this right triangle's first discovery within a circle). This ratio (1.1283791670955125738961589031215..) of the hypotenuse to long side of a circle-squaring right triangle effectively defines a circle and its square (a side of the square). Perhaps, "the world's most astonishing number" (Φ) will soon be eclipsed by "the world's most impossible number" (squaring the circle is impossible, according to Ferdinand von Lindemann, et al.). Update: August, 2017 Stop the presses! $2(\sqrt{1/\pi})$ is eclipsed by a new "golden rectangle" and its related Φ ($i\Phi$) = 1.913058380271100794740307828.. (approx.) Re: The Golden Ratio by Mario Livio, 2002, p. 85. "The Golden Rectangle is the only rectangle with the property that cutting a square from it produces a similar rectangle." Impressive, however ... The new golden rectangle is the only rectangle with the property that its diagonal has length equal to the diameter of a circle and the long side (of the right triangle) has length equal to a side of that circle's square. The magic? The circle-squaring right triangle with hypotenuse-to-long-side ratio $2(\sqrt{1/\pi})$ and the new $i\Phi$ ratio. (Figure 26, p.85, of Livio's book shows a similar geometric pattern). Note: 'i' of " $i\Phi$ " alludes to the "impossible" squaring of the circle.

As required for a school project, I chose to touch upon the subject of the mysterious, yet ever present ratio of Φ . I had already known quite a bit about the ratio and its presence in architecture around the world through the vast reaches of human history, but this book showed me a world more. Some theories that I had previously believed were discussed in an unbiased, scientific way and showed that however close they were to being representative of Φ , were actually not. Likewise, it shows how seemingly unrelated objects share this golden ratio in their structures, throughout nature and even further out into the reaches of space. If you want a clear definition of the ratio of Φ and want an unbiased analysis of the world's most geometrically beautiful structures and patterns, this book is a must.

Have several of Mario Livio's books and he never disappoints. I enjoyed it and would recommend it.

Until now I during my life have been reading most books concerning history and mathematic. And I find that this book is the result of much research, as it contains much data concerning many

people's individual works during thousands of year. And it's good by looking at the golden ratios connection to respectively architecture, nature, paintings, music, fractals, Wall Street and so on. That is, if there at all is any connection. But maybe, because born in Denmark I would have liked a couple of more lines concerning the connection between the Danish count Tycho Brahe and Johannes Kepler, that is, why Kepler at all became Brahe's assistant in Prague. And besides also with Brahe's connection to the count in Scotland who invented the logarithm, which Kepler used. The book is excellent with the many drawing and especially by the including of 10 mathematical appendixes back in the book.

A wonderful book.

Excellent book

author's goal is to ascertain, in the chapter on art, when the golden mean is applied. he certainly left Charles bouleau in a tenable position, which brings up another point. 14 & 15 century Italian artists had strict contracts that dictated subject, composition, colour, & delivery. so if it was applied the patron was dictating.

I like this book so much that I ordered copies for two of my friends. Anyone interested in numbers will enjoy this book.

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