



The Babylonian Theorem The Mathematical Journey to Pythagoras and Euclid

By Peter S. Rudman

Prometheus Books. Hardcover. Book Condition: New. Hardcover. 248 pages. Dimensions: 9.1in. x 6.1in. x 0.9in. In this sequel to his award-winning *How Mathematics Happened*, physicist Peter S. Rudman explores the history of mathematics among the Babylonians and Egyptians, showing how their scribes in the era from 2000 to 1600 BCE used visualizations of how plane geometric figures could be partitioned into squares, rectangles, and right triangles to invent geometric algebra, even solving problems that we now do by quadratic algebra. Using illustrations adapted from both Babylonian cuneiform tablets and Egyptian hieroglyphic texts, Rudman traces the evolution of mathematics from the metric geometric algebra of Babylon and Egypt which used numeric quantities on diagrams as a means to work out problems to the nonmetric geometric algebra of Euclid (ca. 300 BCE). Thus, Rudman traces the evolution of calculations of square roots from Egypt and Babylon to India, and then to Pythagoras, Archimedes, and Ptolemy. Surprisingly, the best calculation was by a Babylonian scribe who calculated the square root of two to seven decimal-digit precision. Rudman provocatively asks, and then interestingly conjectures, why such a precise calculation was made in a mud-brick culture. From his analysis of Babylonian geometric algebra, Rudman formulates a Babylonian Theorem,...



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