



The Golden Ratio: The Story of Phi, the Extraordinary Number of Nature, Art and Beauty

Mario Livio

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What do the Parthenon in Greece, crosses in graveyards, the ratio of the height of the navel to a woman's total height, sunflowers and Leonardo da Vinci's "Mona Lisa" have in common? The answer is that these disparate elements share a geometrical proportion of ancient origin, commonly known as the 'Golden Ratio', or expressed numerically as phi. In a captivating journey through art and architecture, botany and biology, taking in fractals and DNA on the way, Livio takes us into the heart of this extraordinary number, and gives an account of the phi-obsessed individuals who devoted their lives to discovering its secrets - from the Pythagoreans who believed that the study of the Golden Ratio would reveal the hand of God, to the great astronomer Johannes Kepler who felt that phi was the greatest treasure of geometry, to the modern day scientists who are discovering ever more remarkable ramifications of this strange, almost mystical, number. It is a journey into the heart of beauty itself.

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