



The Nothing That is: A Natural History of Zero

By Robert Kaplan

Oxford University Press Inc, United States, 2000. Paperback. Book Condition: New. 193 x 122 mm. Language: English . Brand New Book. A symbol for what is not there, an emptiness that increases any number it's added to, an inexhaustible and indispensable paradox. As we enter the year 2000, zero is once again making its presence felt. Nothing itself, it makes possible a myriad of calculations. Indeed, without zero mathematics as we know it would not exist. And without mathematics our understanding of the universe would be vastly impoverished. But where did this nothing, this hollow circle, come from? Who created it? And what, exactly, does it mean? Robert Kaplan's *The Nothing That Is: A Natural History of Zero* begins as a mystery story, taking us back to Sumerian times, and then to Greece and India, piecing together the way the idea of a symbol for nothing evolved. Kaplan shows us just how handicapped our ancestors were in trying to figure large sums without the aid of the zero. (Try multiplying CLXIV by XXIV). Remarkably, even the Greeks, mathematically brilliant as they were, didn't have a zero--or did they? We follow the trail to the East where, a...



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