

MR915160 (89f:01006) 01A05 (01-01)

Ifrah, Georges

★ **From one to zero.**

A universal history of numbers.

Translated from the French by Lowell Bair.

Penguin Books, New York, 1987. xvi+503 pp. \$14.95. ISBN 0-14-009919-0

In the subjects dealt with, this English translation of Ifrah's book differs little from the German translation described in the preceding review [Campus Verlag GmbH, Frankfurt am Main, 1986]; a chapter has been added on proto-Elamite numbers, as have brief sections on the notations of certain other cultures; a chapter on cuneiform writing has been deleted. All but a dozen footnotes have been deleted in the translation; so have all bibliographic references apart from the sources of quotations; in these latter, furthermore, only volumes but not page numbers are given. Less than a hundred items from the bibliography (out of more than 700) have survived. The book is therefore still an entertaining and inspiring popular exposition of the subject, but it has lost all value as a professional tool. For such purposes, one has to turn to the French original [Editions Seghers, Paris, 1981] or the German translation [op. cit.].

Reviewed by *Jens Høyrup*

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