

Book Reviews

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BOOK REVIEWS

I. Ruzsa: DIE BEGRIFFSWELT DER MATHEMATIK, Akadémiai Kiadó, Budapest 1976.

Kniha, ako autor sám v úvode píše, je venovaná záujemcom o modernú matematiku, ktorí nemajú odborné matematické školenie. Cieľom knihy je oboznámiť čitateľa s pojmami, ktoré do dnešného sveta doniesla intenzívna vlna takzvanej množinovej matematiky.

Kniha je rozdelená do šiestich kapitol. Prvá je venovaná základným pojmom intuitívnej teórie množín. V druhej je opísaný proces stavby reálnych čísel. Tretia kapitola hovorí o infinitezimálnych pojmoch. Najkratšia, štvrtá kapitola sa vymyká z celkového rámca knihy — je venovaná neeuklidovskej geometrii. Piata kapitola pokračuje v štúdiu pojmu kardinálneho čísla, začatom v prvej kapitole. Tentoraz sa však akcent kladie na nekonečné množiny; dospieva sa až ku axiomatickej stavbe teórie množín. Záverečná šiesta kapitola je venovaná logickým základom matematiky.

Najväčším prínosom tejto publikácie je množstvo dobre premyslených a detailne rozpracovaných situácií, ktoré ilustratívnym spôsobom sprístupňujú náročné pojmy a abstraktné myšlienky matematiky. Rozsiahly materiál si však nevyhnutne vyžiadal rozsiahly text, a tak sa značne znížil úspech knihy u čitateľa-laika. Zdá sa pravdepodobnejšie, že po 450-stranovej publikácii siahne skôr učiteľ matematiky, ktorý tu nájde veľa cenných impulzov ku svojej práci. Z hľadiska takéhoto uplatnenia by však bolo užitočné, poukázať nielen na ilustráciu pojmov, ale aj na genéziu myšlienok, ktoré k týmto objavom viedli. Ako nedostatok je pociťovaná absencia ilustrácií, ktoré by demonštrovali užitočnosť jazyka množín v syntetizačných procesoch súčasných vedeckých a technických disciplín.

Z metodického hľadiska je markantná odlišnosť stupňa abstrakcie jednotlivých kapitol. Orientáciu čitateľovi by uľahčil register pojmov.

Milan Hejný, Bratislava

J. Kaucký: KOMBINATORICKÉ IDENTITY (Combinatorial identities). Veda, Publishing House of the Slovak Academy of Sciences, Bratislava 1975, 475 pages. Published in Czech.

The central concept throughout the book is that of binomial coefficient. Returning again and again to some formulae with binomial coefficients the book discusses a host of problems, techniques and results around the theme, combinatorial identities. With an enviable patience the author has collected a multitude of identities and their proofs straggled in journals and books throughout the world. Comparatively self-contained, requiring (on some places only) some knowledge of the elements of the theory of functions of a complex variable, this book can serve two different purposes. Firstly, it can be recommended as a mine of interesting results, well presented. Secondly, it may be recommended to young neophytes in elementary combinatorics as an easily readable introduction to some topics from this area of mathematics. A number of exercises (even with exact references and, moreover, detailed solutions at the end of the book) complements each chapter.

It is regrettable that the book is not written in a congress language, but thanks to the international character of the used symbolism the book may be consulted also by foreigners.

From the contents of the book. One and half pages Chapter I is rather a supplement to the author's foreward. Chapter II (55 pp.) deals with basic properties of factorials and binomial coefficients. Something about beta and gamma functions, van der Waerden's proof of Strirling's formula, Cauchy's expression of binomial coefficient as an integral, etc. can be found here. Chapter ends with Lyche's (Nordisk Mat. Tidsskr. 8, 1926) generalization of binomial coefficient. Chapter III (23pp.) summaries the definitions and various properties of permutations and combinations when repetitions are or are not allowed. Chapter IV (31pp.) outlines certain aspect of the calculus of finite differences, namely the underlying notions and some methods for solving difference equations. In Chapter V (42 pp.) the elements of the theory of generating functions are touched. In Chapter IV and V special emphasis is put on applications of these theories to author's main goal, deriving various combinatorial identities. The heart of the book is Chapter VI (155 pp.). This chapter reproduces a miscellany of combinatorial identities and in most cases several known proofs are presented. A brief history, development and other interesting data accompany almost each of the mentioned identities. Some sub-headings of this chapter: an identity of Chinese mathematician Li Jen-Shoo, Morely-Dixon's formula, Hagen's formula, identities of Abel's type, Grosswald's identities, etc. Chapter VII (103 pp.) contains full solutions of exercises given in the previous chapters. Again, several solutions are offered, if available. Chapter VIII (11 pp.) contains some additional identities outside the scope of the preceding parts of the book. Chapter IX (33 pp.) reproduces once more all the identities proved in Chapters I—VI.

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