Remark 1. Our choice of the cube roots α_1 and α_2 is dictated by the proof. However, to find the three solutions of (3), it is obvious that any choice of α_1 and α_2 will suffice, because the other choices just permute the three numbers in (8).

Remark 2. If the reader is familiar with the group structure on the points of the elliptic curve

$$y^2 = x^3 + ax + b \quad (9)$$

with coordinates in $\mathbb{C}$, together with the point O at infinity, the solutions of (3) are the x -coordinates of points of order two on (9).

Suggested Reading

- [1] D S Dumit and R M Foote, *Abstract Algebra*, John Wiley, 2004.
- [2] B L van der Waerden, *Algebra*, Vol. I, Frederick Unger, 1970.
- [3] Girolamo Cardano, *Ars Magna*, Dover, 1993.
- [4] F Cajori, *A History of Mathematical Notations*, Dover, 1993.
- [5] D J Struik, *A Concise History of Mathematics*, Dover, 1948.

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Errata

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Page 6: second paragraph, 4th line

... crescent shaped infected blood cells should read,

... crescent shaped parasites inside the infected blood cells...

Page 42: The first two sentences should read,

The intensity of solar radiation in the Earth's direction from the Sun is approximately 1.353 kw/m^2 , a number also called the 'Solar Constant'. Accordingly, it is estimated that Earth receives about 96 billion kw from the Sun constantly.'

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