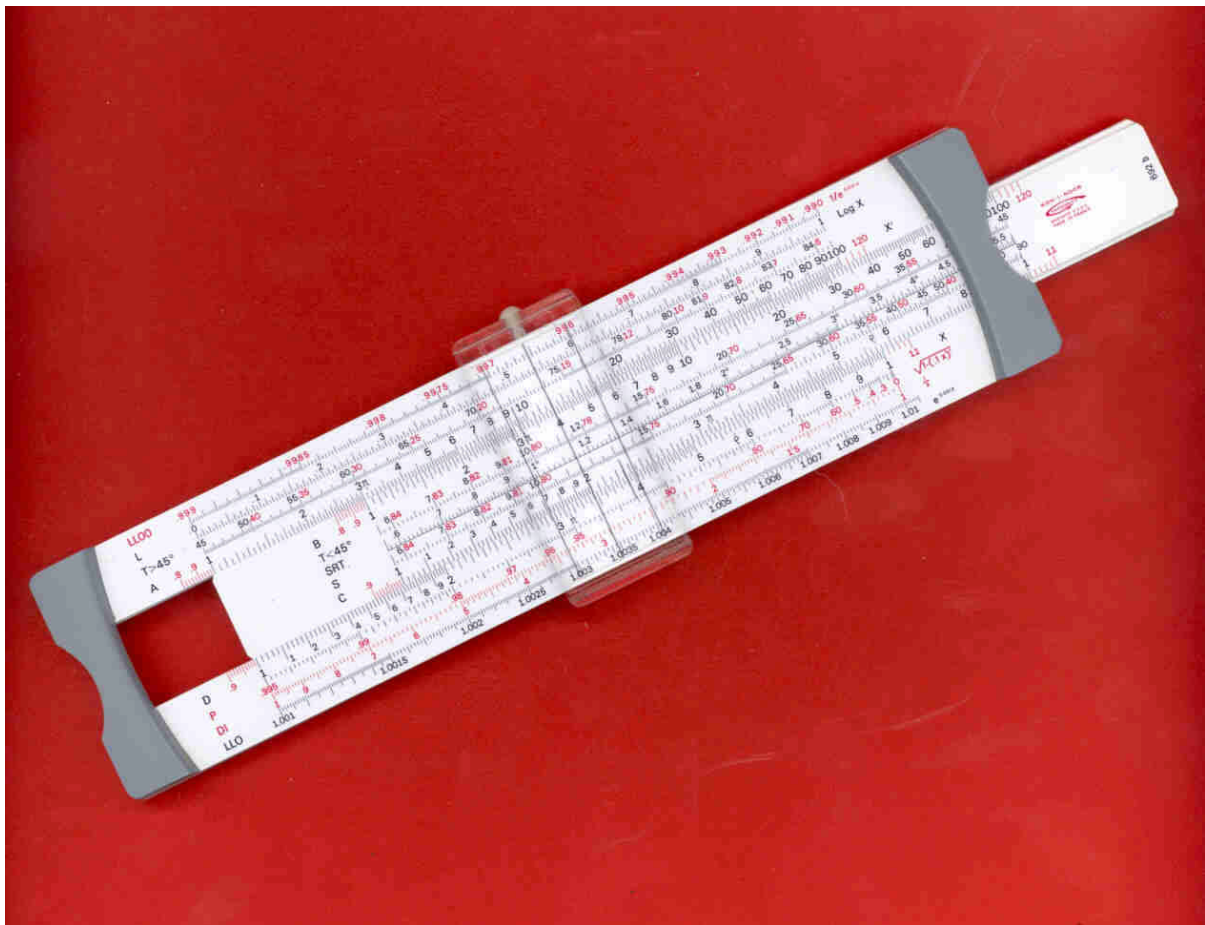


As announced in MIR47, here is the solution to my little quiz on the "slide rule on a postage stamp" that I stuck on each envelope with MIR46.

The total number of entries has been disappointing, the more so because I know that more people have seen the stamp than have entered the quiz. I had really expected a dozen or so entries, but this was not the case. Does this mean that slide rule collectors collect only slide rules? Or that they were so eager to read the interesting contents of the MIR that they forgot to look at the stamps on the envelope?



Anyways, here is the original scan of the slide rule:



The exact slide rule type may not even be readable in this scan, but it is a Graphoplex 692 b, or more exactly, the Italian Koh-I-Noor version. This version is distinguishable through the box it came in and the text KOH-I-NOOR in minuscule letters above the Graphoplex logo, barely visible in the scan but not visible on the stamps.

Otto van Poelje stated that it must be Graphoplex pocket slide rule and the only one with this type of bridge was the 692, which exists in an "a" and a "b" version. Otto then said that it couldn't be a 692 b because the scales on that one were different from those in Herman's database and on the website of Daniel Toussaint and therefore, he concluded that it must be a 692 a. Otto even used his stereoscopic microscope to try and improve his view, and for the effort he took, he should get a special citation. Otto was correct that the 692 b on Daniel Toussaint's website (<http://www.linealis.org/spip.php?article86>) is different in that the bridge is on the other side, but otherwise it is identical. Moreover, to add to the confusion, Daniel gives a wrong scale layout. So, Otto, it really is a 692 b. Whether the difference is due to this being the Koh-I-Noor variant, I don't know, perhaps a subject for some future research? It is known that Graphoplex made rules

with the same designation with slightly different lay-outs, so why not for this particular type? Or was the side where the bridge was glued not deliberately chosen but purely by hazard? Comparing large numbers of 692 b's (but how many could there still be around?) might shed some light on this. Otto: you were the closest and you win one of my slide rules.

Then on the calculation shown. This proved more difficult than I had expected and nobody got it right! Apparently my statement that "this calculation involves only the basic scales present on each normal slide rule" was interpreted as limiting to just the C and D scales and  $2 \times 2$  was the only answer mentioned, even though it was acknowledged that the left index of the C scale was lined up to the left of the 2 on the D scale. On the scan it is clear that the left index of the B scale is lined up with the 3 on the A scale, so the calculation is actually  $2 \times ?3$ . Perhaps the extensions of the scales to the left of the index and the multiple lines of the cursor were confusing, but hey, you don't get one of my slide rules that easily! Because nobody had it right, the nearest solution is eligible for a prize and David Rance wins the second of my slide rules.

I will see both Otto and David often enough in the months to come to hand them their prizes in person.



**BLADVULLING:**

Keep staring at the black dot. After a while the gray haze around it will appear to shrink.

