

# PROSTHAPHAERESIS AND JOHANNES WERNER (1468 – 1522 <sup>1</sup>)

-

A history of the forerunner of the logarithm and of its inventor.

$$\sin a \cdot \sin c = \frac{1}{2} \{ \sin ((90^\circ - a) + c) - \sin ((90^\circ - c) - a) \}$$

(for  $0 < a, 0 < c, 0 < a+c < 90^\circ$ )

by  
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<sup>1</sup> The German version [Kuehn 2008] states the year as 1528, which is not correct according to recent findings; Nuremberg 2009

## **1 Acknowledgements/Dedications**

The authors thank Professor Dr. Menso Folkerts for information concerning a most important document about Prosthaphaeresis: [Björnbo]. Interestingly, this source has been digitised recently which might reflect the importance of this publication.

The authors also thank Ms. Barbara Häberlin, Mr. Stephan Drechsler and Mr. Stephan Weiss for their critical comments and suggestions for changes to the original German version of this work.

Furthermore, the authors thank Ms. Magister Dr. Gerlinde Faustmann for providing a reference to Jost Bürgi's work on the proof of the prosthaphaeretic formulae.

This paper would not have the quality presented without the thorough and competent review by Professor Dr. Joachim Fischer, whose work is gratefully acknowledged.

## 2 Abstract

### English

For most of his life Johannes Werner (1468-1522) was a priest and astronomer living in Nuremberg, Germany. He first published the prosthaphaeretic formulae (the term "prosthaphaeretic" coming from the Greek for addition and subtraction) around 1513 in a manuscript; this information is mainly supported by very intensive research carried out by Axel Anthon Björnbo (1874-1911) [Björnbo].

It is not exactly known if Werner was aware at that time of the advantageous use of the prosthaphaeretic formula for calculations with multidigit numbers; however, this can be assumed as being the case.

Moreover, strong evidence shows that neither the astronomer Tycho Brahe (1546-1601) nor his student Paul Wittich (1555? - 1587) invented the prosthaphaeretic formula. However, Tycho Brahe was among the first, who - from 1580 to 1601 - took intensive advantage of the prosthaphaeretic formula for his astronomical calculations.

This paper reviews the historical background for the formulation and "re-invention" of prosthaphaeresis.

On the basis of the relevant literature it gives some practical examples as well as the mathematical-geometrical proof of the formula.

### Deutsch

Johannes Werner (1468-1522), Pfarrer und Astronom, verbrachte die meiste Zeit seines Lebens in Nürnberg und ist derjenige, der um 1513 die prosthaphäretische Formel - der Begriff kommt aus dem Griechischen und steht für Addition und Subtraktion (siehe Formel im Titel) - in einem Manuskript festhielt.

Besonders die gründliche Untersuchung von Axel Anthon Björnbo (1874-1911) [Björnbo] legt dazu inzwischen zahlreiche Hinweise vor. Ob Werner deren Eignung als Rechenmethode für die Multiplikation mehrstelliger Zahlen bewusst war, lässt sich nicht mit Bestimmtheit sagen, liegt aber nahe. Sicher ist, dass es weder der Astronom Tycho Brahe (1546-1601) noch sein Schüler Paul Wittich (1555? - 1587) waren, die diese Formel entdeckt hatten. Tycho Brahe war allerdings einer derjenigen, der die Prosthaphärese zu seiner Zeit - zwischen 1580 und 1601 - sehr intensiv zu (astronomischen) Berechnungen einsetzte.

In diesem Aufsatz werden die Hintergründe zur Darstellung und "Wiederentdeckung" der Prosthaphärese, deren Anwendungsbereiche und ein mathematisch-geometrischer Beweis der Formel auf Basis der relevanten Literatur aufgezeichnet.

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## 4 Introduction

For a long time, people have looked for ways to simplify computing procedures. It was not so important how difficult the calculations might have been; the goal was always to reduce the amount of computation, but without losing any accuracy.

Particularly in the field of astronomy, in which mathematics first developed, where computations with multidigit numbers were (and still are) a necessity, these computations were very expensive in time and effort. This particularly concerned the basic operations of arithmetic such as multiplication and division, so if it would be possible to simplify these operations, for example by reducing multiplication to addition, then that would be an ideal solution.

The most well-known example of this methodology, the reduction of multiplication to simpler functions, is the logarithm; logarithms were published in 1614 in Edinburgh by John Napier (1550-1617) in the first table of logarithms (*Mirifici Logarithmorum Canonis Descriptio*).

But what happened before then? How did astronomers do their calculations without having logarithms at their disposal?

The answer is that for about hundred years they used *prosthaphaeresis*, (also written as *prosthaphairesis* or *prostaphairesis*)

Literature on the subject of Prosthaphaeresis frequently mentions an incorrect name as its inventor; usually the discovery is attributed to the astronomer Tycho Brahe or to his pupil Paul Wittich, or sometimes even to Christopher Clavius. However, Brian Borchers gave a short overview of Prosthaphaeresis and its history in his article in the Journal of the Oughtred Society (JOS) [Borchers], and in that article he referred to its originator as being Johannes Werner.

Borchers' article stands as the starting point for this article, in which the background to the Prosthaphaeretic formula, and to Prosthaphaeresis itself, will be clarified from historical and mathematical viewpoints.

The term "Prosthaphaeresis" - meaning a system in which one uses addition and subtraction - also has other usages in astronomy; thus one speaks, for example, of prosthaphaeresis in connection with: *aequinoctiorum*; *eccentritatis*; *latitudinis*; *nodi pro eclipsius*; *orbis*; *tychonica*; *nodorum* - "an orbiting body does not move itself evenly; it moves more slowly if the Sun is in the proximity of the body; faster, if the Sun moves away from it." [Bialas]. However, these purely astronomical usages of the term "prosthaphaeresis" will not be considered further in this essay.

Johannes Werner (1468 - 1522) can be seen to be the discoverer of Prosthaphaeresis, and substantial support for this can be found in a work by Axel Anthon Björnbo [Björnbo]. As a disciple of the historian of science Anton von Braunmühl, Björnbo took up von Braunmühl's references to some inconsistencies and went to Rome in 1901, so that he could read and study appropriate ancient material in the Vatican library.

Of particular interest, he found an undated manuscript, with the title: 'I. Ioannis Veneri Norimbergensis "de triangulis sphaericis"<sup>2</sup>' in four books, and also "II. Ioannis Veneri Norimbergensis "de meteoroscopiis" ' in six books.

Queen Christina of Sweden had been in possession of this manuscript, probably between 1654 and 1689; this document had been previously owned by Jakob Christmann (1554 - 1613).

<sup>2</sup>For easier reading, this word is spelled in this article "sphaericis" instead of the original "sphaericis" (see Figure 5-3)

After Queen Christina's death in 1689, this manuscript (Codex Reginensis latinus 1259, i.e. Regina Sveciae Collection, item 1259) lay mainly disregarded in the Vatican. The journey of this manuscript through time is documented in chapter 11.

During further investigations it became clear that Werner was the editor and/or an author of the two handwritten parts, but that he did not physically write them himself.

As to the actual writer of the document, Björnbo identified a mathematically-inexperienced professional scribe of the time.[Björnbo; Pages 140, 141, 171].

The text of the first complete part of the manuscript (*de triangulis sphaericis*) can be found in Björnbo's work [Björnbo; Chapter 1] on pages 1 - 133. Later on Björnbo voices his opinions concerning this manuscript both in the "publisher remarks" [Björnbo; Chapter 3] and also in "text history" [Björnbo; Chapter 4] in a very detailed research report.

However, the extensive contents of that manuscript will not be dealt with further in this essay.

It should be mentioned however, that as an innovation for its time, the organisation/arrangement of the books concerning spherical triangles is the following [Björnbo; Chapter 1 and pages 163; 177-183]:

- 1. An explanation of the different possible triangle forms (Book I)**
  - a. A discussion concerning the spherical triangle**
- 2. Solutions of the right-angled triangle (Book II)**
  - a. The spherical-trigonometric basic formulae**
  - b. The solution of the right-angled spherical triangle**
- 3. Solutions of the non-right-angled (obtuse) triangle (Book III and IV)**
  - a. The solution of the obtuse triangle by decomposition into right-angled triangles (Book III)**
  - b. The solution of the obtuse spherical triangle by a prosthaphaeretically transformed Cosine rule (Book IV)**

The three categories stated are of the same structure as the contents of the *Opus Palatinum* of Rheticus of 1596, in so far as spherical triangles are concerned.

In chapter 5 [Björnbo; starting from page 177] is summarised the structure of the contents of the individual books in a tabular form.

Thus the findings of Björnbo, namely, the assumptions of Anton von Braunmühl [von Braunmühl 1897] which confirm the authorship of the prosthaphaeretic formula, along with recent up-to-date work by David A. King [King] and Victor E. Thoren [Thoren] together constitute the foundation for the remainder of this article.

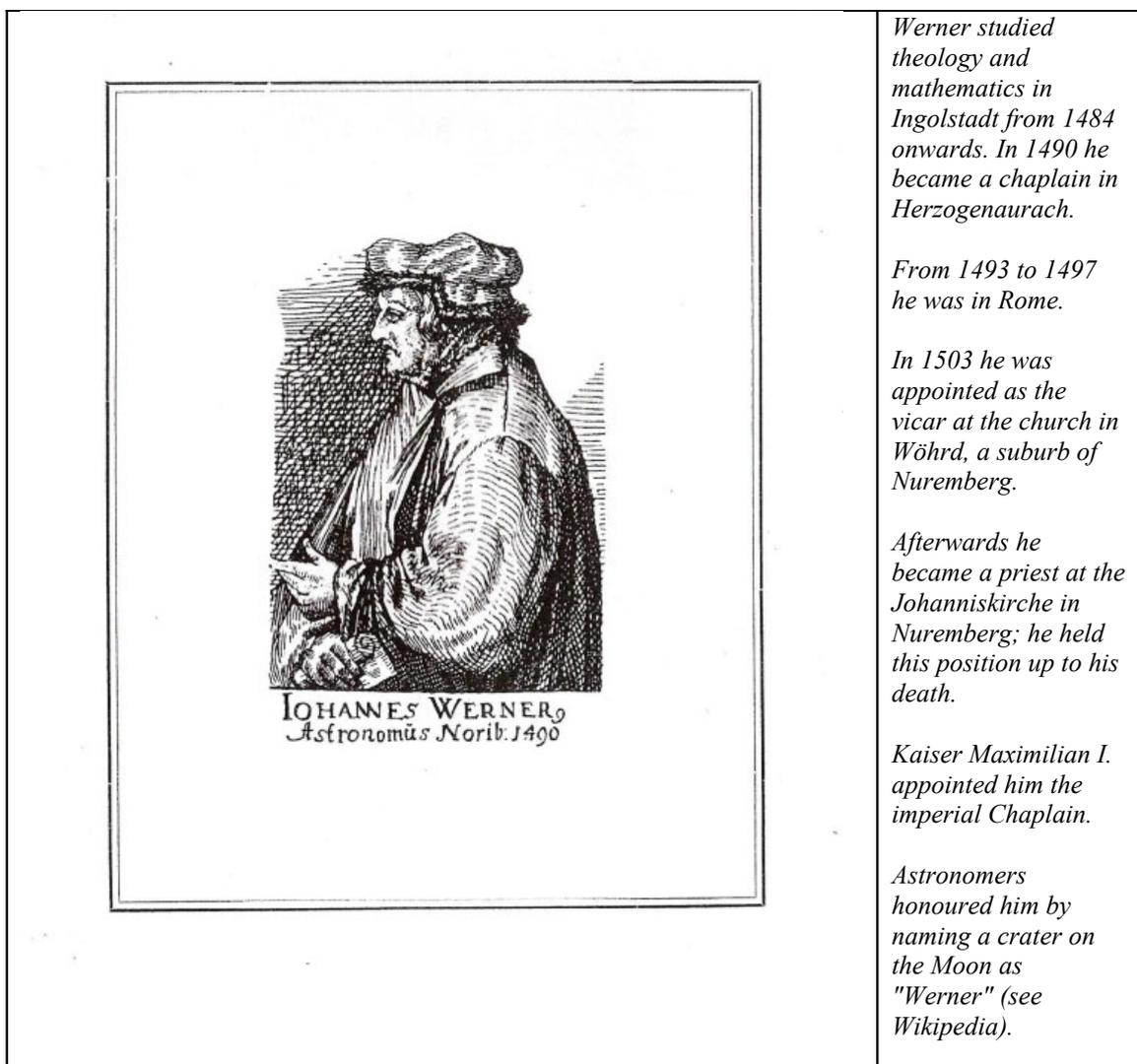
## 5 Historical

The history of Prosthaphaeresis is summarised in the time table in the appendix, and is derived from several sources [Björnbo; von Braunmühl].

Here now it is necessary to briefly describe the details of Johannes Werner's life, along with the steps in time of the development of Prosthaphaeresis, including its "rediscovery" and its sequence of publication.

Johannes Werner was born on 14 February 1468 in Nuremberg and died in (May?) 1522 in Nuremberg while he was in the position of parish priest in the municipality of St. Johannes.

In his spare time he worked as a mathematician, astronomer, astrologer, geographer and cartographer.



*Figure 5-1 Johannes Werner*

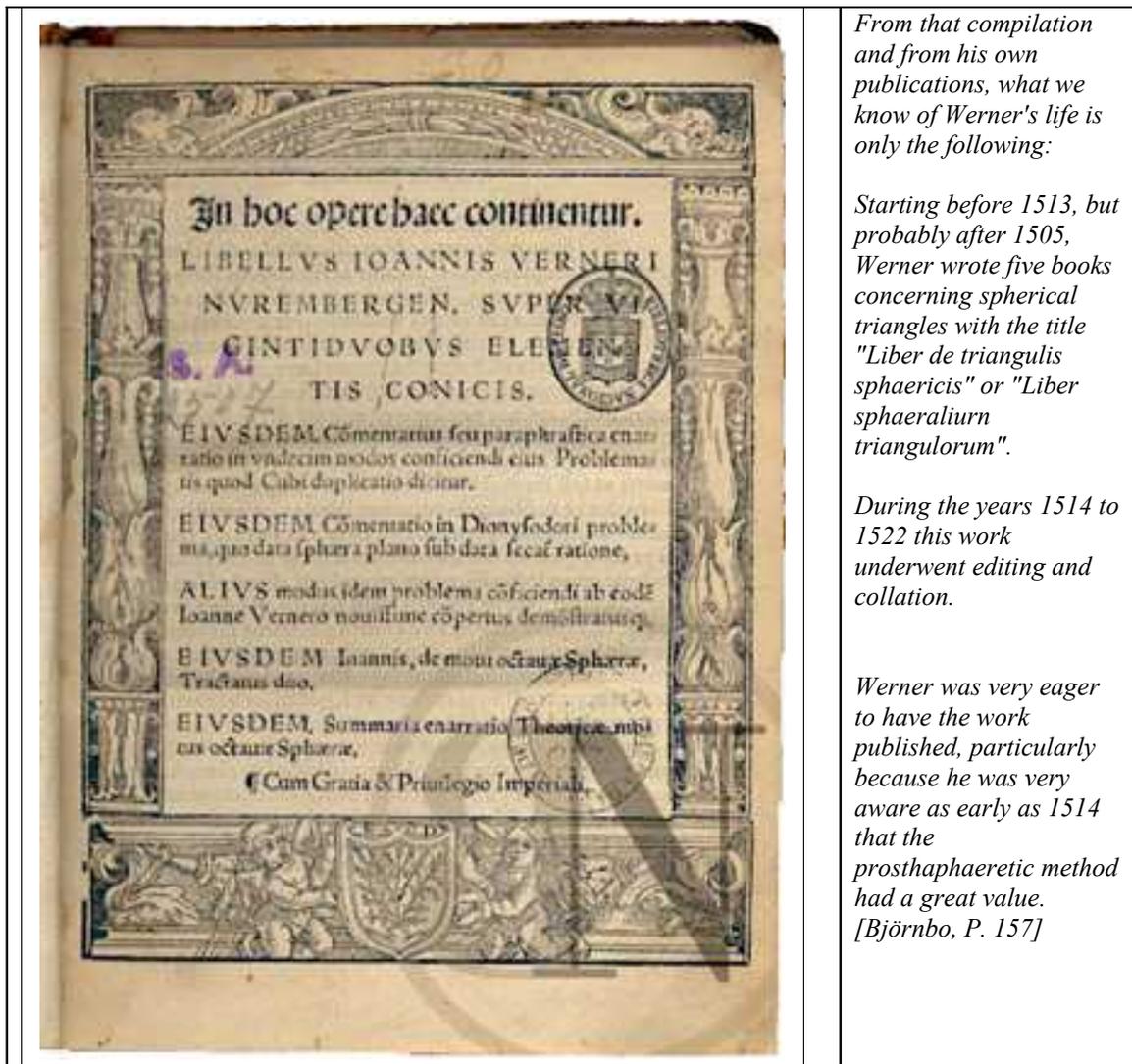
*Werner was very much interested in Astrology and created horoscopes for numerous well-known Nuremberg residents, including Erasmus Topler (1462-1512), Provost of St. Sebald, Willibald Pirckheimer (1470-1530), Christoph Scheurl II (1481-1542) and Sebald Schreyer (1446-1520). However, Werner gained harsh criticism from these activities. Lorenz Beheim (around 1457-1521), a choirmaster in Bamberg, wrote about him thus: "He always makes a big thing of his secrets, which however result in little honour for him. Mostly, if he wants to predict the truth, he invents it.*

*Werner became friendly with Johannes Stabius (approximately 1460-1522). In co-operation with him, he developed numerous important works. Werner suggested the construction of a sun-dial, designed to show "Nuremberg time", which essentially meant that the clock should indicate the hours passed since sunrise. Stabius supplied a design, which Sebastian Sperantius (? - 1525) drew on the east choir of the Lorenzkirche in 1502.*

*Stabius also pushed Werner to publish his manuscripts. In November 1514, the compilation under the management of Conrad Heinfogel (? - 1517) left the printing press. Amongst other things therein, a certain form of the map projection is presented, which is known to historians as the Stabius-Werner Projection. In 1522 appeared a second compilation (Figure 5-2), which contained his work, "On the Motion of the Eighth Sphere" or "De motu octavae Sphaerae". He studied the precession of the stars from the geocentric point of view; however, for this he was fiercely criticised by Copernicus (1473 – 1543) in the latter's "Letter against Werner"[Sobel].*

This and other information, particularly also concerning Werner's meteorological activities, can be found on the Internet under [Nuremberg] and [Wikipedia].

A first compilation was published in 1514 under the title: "In hoc opere haec continentur: Nova translatio primi libri geographiae Cl. Ptolemaei, quae quidem translatio verbum habet e verbo fideliter expressum Ioanne Vernero Nurembergensi interprete.....", containing work by him and by other authors.



**Figure 5-2** *Compilation of 1522 [according to Mehl - from the library in Lisbon]*

Björnbo draws this conclusion from the similarity of the contents of the manuscript with the contents of the compilations. On the one hand it concerned the amazing similarity and/or sameness of the solution of a triangle using orthogonal projection. Therein Werner had "already written in a pure form the prosthaphaeretic method and its application for the practical transformation of the Cosine Rule, i.e. the second main rule of spherical Trigonometry\*."

\*

$$\cos B = \frac{\cos b - \cos a \cos c}{\sin a \sin c}$$

Further he says [Björnbo; Page 155]: "In the compilation of the year 1522 there appears in Werner's book "De motu octavae Sphaerae".... in the triangle (star<sup>3</sup>; pole of the ecliptic; north pole) the height of the Star ( $\lambda$ ) by its width ( $\beta$ ), its declination ( $\delta$ ) and its inclination to the ecliptic ( $\epsilon$ ), i.e. that the angle of a skew spherical triangle is numerically determined by its three given sides...."

Björnbo takes the fact that the emergence of prosthaphaeresis must have taken place after 1505 from one of the available quotations in the translation of Euclid's work by Zamberti (Bartholomäo Zamberto Veneto) which became available only after 1505.

<sup>3</sup> The triangle is determined by the three corners: star; pole of the ecliptic; north pole

After it was clear that the manuscript Cod. Reg. 1259 had its origin in these two works by Johannes Werner, the search was on, after Werner's death, to find out the development and the whereabouts of this Cod. Reg. 1259.

Up to the death of Werner in the year 1522 the two works had still not been printed, or at least, no appropriate references or copies have been found from that time.

The contents of Book I - Ioannis Veneri *Norimbergensis "De triangulis sphaericis"* in four books, as well as Book II - Ioannis Veneri *Norimbergensis "De meteoroscopiis"* in six books, were however well known to Werner's contemporaries, including Johann Wilhelm von Loubenberg and his colleague Peter Apian.

The bibliographer Konrad Gesner (1516-1576) describes in 1555 that the Nuremberg mathematician and mechanic George Hartmann (1489-1564) saved the two works of Werner from destruction. According to Doppelmayr, Hartmann probably handed over these and other works from Werner's estate in 1542 in Nuremberg to George Joachim Reticus (1514-1576; who lived from 1554 in Kraków as a practicing physician).

G. Eneström [Eneström] determined that both works of Johannes Werner were published by Reticus in the year 1557 in Kraków.

However this publication contained, apart from the title page, only the ten-page introduction (The Prooemium) by Reticus and nothing else which Werner wrote.

The title page contains clear references to the titles of the two books mentioned above.

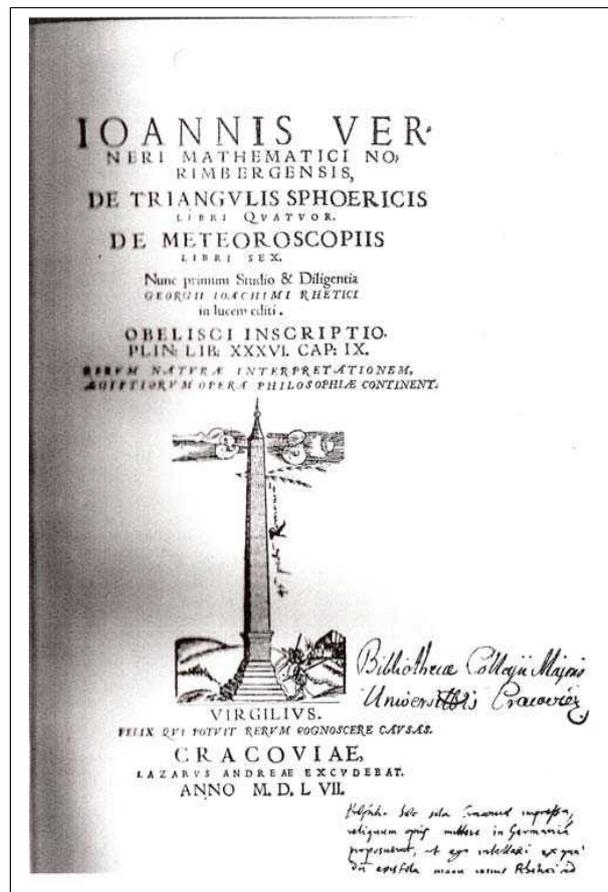


Figure 5-3 The title page of the Kraków publication.

Björnbo sees, as an explanation for the absence of the text, the fact that Reticus, and after his death his disciple Valentinus Otho (approx. 1550-1605), had incorporated both the arrangement (a systematic presentation of different triangle forms) and the contents of the "De triangulis sphaericis", in the great

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book of tables *Opus Palatinum* (which was published in 1596) and they had perfected the philosophies of Johannes Werner, whom they both admired and respected.

However Rheticus did not himself support the solution of spherical triangles either by Ptolemaios' method or by Geber's method (which was developed by Peurbach, Regiomontanus and Werner).

So, he developed his own method independently; this method derived from the geometry of pyramids, using common points at the centre of the sphere; this latter methodology is derived from Copernicus [Björnbo, page 163 foot-note 2].

Rheticus was the only disciple of Copernicus and by his publication of the famous "De revolutionibus orbium coelestium Libri VI" had himself taken up the cause of providing a reliable sine table.

Thus Björnbo assumes the Vatican manuscript Cod Reg 1259 was in Rheticus' possession and represented a copy of the original, and that it should serve as a beginning point.

This printed manuscript - which contained no drawings - fell into the hands of his disciple Valentinus Otho after the death of Rheticus in 1576.

From this bequest the manuscript went to the Heidelberg professor Jakob Christmann (1554-1613) {Björnbo P. 165 incorrectly describes the date of death as 1630}, who quoted from the two works of Werner in his book "*Theoria lunae*" (1611), and even indicated that he possessed the two books.

In his dissertation of 1924, Erwin Christmann (a descendant of Jakob Christmann) wrote [Christmann]:

- " *The "Theoria lunae" plays a remarkable role in the history of trigonometry, as it gave in an appendix, information concerning the inventor of the prosthaphaeretic method.*

*Until the discovery of Werner's two documents, "de triangulis sphaericis" and "de meteoroscopiis" by A. Björnbo in 1902 in the Vatican library in Rome, the "Theoria lunae" was one of the few sources to bring clarity over this long disputed question.*

*For von Braunmühl in 1899 in his "Lectures on the History of Trigonometry", Christmann's writing is the most outstanding support for his proof of the invention of the prosthaphaeretic method by Johannes Werner.*

*Christmann explained here, that the manuscript of that work was well-known to him, -although it is not known whether it was the original manuscript, later lost, or the printed copy from the Vatican library, which was available to him -. Werner developed and described in figures the Prosthaphaeresis. He defended this against Tycho Brahe, who with his disciple Wittich, was generally regarded as being the inventor. Christmann is probably referring to a transcript, which would be good as a basis on which to work; his words therefore do not suggest a deliberate deception.*

- *"Even today these relationships are not as clear as could be desired. It is feasible to recognise Werner as the inventor of the method and as the person who saw the opportunities for its possible use; however, in reality he is more the re-discoverer of the prosthaphaeretic formulae, as they were already well known to Arabic mathematicians. On the other hand, one must be objective and the trustworthy mathematical and astronomical circle of Count Wilhelm of Hessen above all ascribe to Wittich and Tycho Brahe the exclusive merit of the general introduction of the use of the prosthaphaeretic formulae in calculation. The meaning of their activity must be recognised all the more, in that the holy-of-holies inventors of logarithms and of their practical use had not become available. Furthermore, that this was not a collection of formulae by Wittich and Tycho Brahe can be proven by comparative research.*
- *In addition to the information given in the "theoria lunae" Christmann brings a full development of the method and key phrases from the triangle theory, so far as it was required.*

*He had already summarised these into his works "observationum solarium libri tres, in quibus explicatur versus motus Solis in sodiaca et universa doctrina triangulorum ad rationes*

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*apparentius coelestium accomodatur Basel 1601*". In another work called "*nodus Cordinis ex doctrina sinum explicatus 1612*" he taught the solution of geometrical problems with the help of sines, instead of using algebraic methods.

- *Although today, by the rediscovery of Werner's trigonometrical work, the "theoria lunae" with its data has receded into the background, nevertheless its existence remains historically notable, particularly because its statements were, as a result of recent investigations, accepted as correct and also because together with the two writings from the years 1601 and 1612 written by a professor from Heidelberg interested in trigonometry, it puts down a clear testimony."*

Anton von Braunmühl based his remarks for the development of the prosthaphaeresis particularly on the statements of Jakob Christmann. He sees the origin of these formulae as being with Ibn Yunus, an Arab mathematician who died in 1009. However, according to David A. King [King], on the basis of new knowledge which he acquired while working on his thesis, this idea is no longer valid.

What role does Tycho Brahe (1546-1601), the Danish astronomer, play in connection with Prosthaphaeresis, which he himself began to use in 1580?

According to [von Braunmühl 1899] "*Tycho Brahe knew the source, in which Werner, using his trigonometrical books, applies the prosthaphaeretic method in order to find the elevation of Spica Virginis, because he often speaks of Werner's writing "De motu octavae Sphaerae" and he (Tycho) particularly drew upon this observation of Spica. However the wording of that source could make it attentive only of the existence of a more practical calculation procedure than the usual one is, the procedure itself was absolutely not taken out of that source."*

It is possible that Brahe either had direct access to Johannes Werner's manuscript, or that it may be assumed that the manuscript's contents were known to him. [Björnbo, Page 168 ff] There are several ways in which this might have happened; see also [Thoren]:

1. During Brahe's visits to Wittenberg in the years 1566 or 1568-1569 or 1575, he may have seen Johannes Werner's books about triangles.
2. Paul Wittich and Brahe could have developed their own prosthaphaeretic method in 1580.
3. Reimarus Ursus (Nicolai Reimers; 1551-1600) - during a visit to the island Hven, where Brahe worked in 1584, may have stolen the prosthaphaeretic formula, and was thereafter considered as an intimate enemy of Brahe. In Ursus' *Fundamentum Astronomicum* (Strasbourg 1588) Johannes Werner's prosthaphaeretic formula is published for the first time.
4. Jost Bürgi, who was in contact with Wittich, may have played a role and may have received the formula from Wittich in Kassel - according to [Thoren] and [Lutstorf], Bürgi may then have provided the geometrical proofs.
5. Johann Richter (also known as Praetorius) (1537-1616) saw the book concerning spheres in 1569 written by Rheticus (he writes about it in 1599) and was from 1571-1576 a Professor of Mathematics in Wittenberg. According to a letter which Brahe wrote in 1588 to Hayck, he had not met Praetorius in 1575.
6. The role of Paul Wittich - to whom Brahe in 1592 (5 years after Wittich's death) ascribed the discovery of the Prosthaphaeresis. This is also proposed by [Thoren], who differentiates between the prosthaphaeretic formula itself, and actual computations with that formula.

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Possibly it was a mixture of the above points, which led to the fact that Tycho Brahe became acquainted with prosthaphaeresis and then further developed it with Paul Wittich and learned how to use it. Anton von Braunmühl [von Braunmühl; Part 1, page 193] therefore speaks of a “re-invention” of prosthaphaeresis by Brahe in the year 1580. Also Kepler refers to prosthaphaeresis on one occasion as “*Artificium Tychonicum*”, then again as “*Negotium Wittichianum*” and finally as “*Regula Wittichiana*” [von Braunmühl 1899].

The historical journey of the manuscript and of the formulae are graphically summarised in the appendix.

Now, the significance of Regiomontanus (Johannes Mueller, born in 1436 in Königsberg near Hassfurt - died in 1476 in Rome) concerning the work of Johannes Werner will be considered. Björnbo [Björnbo, page 172ff] explains the fact that Werner gained access to Regiomontanus' works, among other things the five “unfinished and mutilated“ triangle books quite late - in fact, as late as 1504. Werner was not happy about this, and perhaps for this reason makes no reference in his own work to Regiomontanus, and does not cite the latter's work. Perhaps, because he was very familiar with the works of Euclid, Menelaus, Geber, Ptolemaios and Peurbach as used by Regiomontanus, he did not want to repeat Regiomontanus' work. However similarities can be seen in the ideas and in some of the expressions found in Regiomontanus' work and in Werner's work.

In connection with the history of prosthaphaeresis there frequently appear names of some very well-known and of some less known scholars, who cannot be dealt with in great detail here, but who should not be completely ignored. Their roles and work in connection with prosthaphaeresis are probably worth a completely separate investigation, but their names and some details are given here:

- Jost Bürgi (1552 - 1632)
- Peter Apian (1495 - 1552)
- Erasmus Reinhold (1511 - 1553)
- Bartholomäus Scultetus / Schulz (1532 - 1614)
- Christoph Clavius (1537 - 1602); (1538 - 1612, is also mentioned as the inventor of the Prosthaphaeresis [symposium 2005]) – he is not, however.
- Nicolaus Reimers /Reimarus Ursus (1551 - 1600)
- Paul Wittich (1555 - 1587)
- Melchior Jöstel (1559 - 1611) and his handwritten treatise “*Logistica Prosthaphaeresis Astronomica*” which can be found in the library of the Austrian National Library, Vienna (Cod. palat. 10686-27) [von Braunmühl 1899] as well as in the Dresden Landesbibliothek (# C 82; private communication from Menso Folkerts).
- Christian Severin Longomontan (1562 - 1647) and finally
- Ibn Yunus (around 1000).

Apart from the first and last, the above names are chronologically ordered according to their years of birth.

Much introductory information and references to these above people can be found in [von Braunmühl 1900], [Lutstorf] and [Thoren] and also in [Gingerich 1988] and [Gingerich 2005].

## 6 Mathematical

To remind the reader, prosthaphaeresis provides a method by the means of which the process of multiplication can be converted into an addition or a subtraction by the use of trigonometric formulae. This technique provided a substantial easing of work for the astronomers of the time.

Looking at books of formulae or on the Internet [Mathworld 11 and 12] it becomes clear that there are many ways of expressing the Prosthaphaeresis formulae. These formulae, which we know as the "prosthaphaeretic formulae" or as the "prosthaphaeresis formulae", are also known as the "Werner Formulae" or as the "Werner Formulas" (Figure 6-1).

$2 \sin \alpha \cos \beta$	=	$\sin (\alpha - \beta) + \sin (\alpha + \beta)$	(1)
$2 \cos \alpha \cos \beta$	=	$\cos (\alpha - \beta) + \cos (\alpha + \beta)$	(2)
$2 \cos \alpha \sin \beta$	=	$\sin (\alpha + \beta) - \sin (\alpha - \beta)$	(3)
$2 \sin \alpha \sin \beta$	=	$\cos (\alpha - \beta) - \cos (\alpha + \beta)$	(4)

**Figure 6-1 The Werner Formulae**

The URL on the above website leads to the Prosthaphaeresis Formulae as shown below in Figure 6-2 and which are known as "Simpson's Formulae" or "Simpson's Formulas". However these formulae differ in their representation and in their ease of use.

$\sin \alpha + \sin \beta$	=	$2 \sin \left[ \frac{1}{2} (\alpha + \beta) \right] \cos \left[ \frac{1}{2} (\alpha - \beta) \right]$	(1)
$\sin \alpha - \sin \beta$	=	$2 \cos \left[ \frac{1}{2} (\alpha + \beta) \right] \sin \left[ \frac{1}{2} (\alpha - \beta) \right]$	(2)
$\cos \alpha + \cos \beta$	=	$2 \cos \left[ \frac{1}{2} (\alpha + \beta) \right] \cos \left[ \frac{1}{2} (\alpha - \beta) \right]$	(3)
$\cos \alpha - \cos \beta$	=	$-2 \sin \left[ \frac{1}{2} (\alpha + \beta) \right] \sin \left[ \frac{1}{2} (\alpha - \beta) \right]$	(4)

**Figure 6-2 Prosthaphaeresis Formulae from Mathworld.**

(In German linguistic usage [von Braunmühl 1900] these formulae shown in Figure 6-1 are known as "Die prosthaphäretischen Formeln".)

In more modern collections of formulae these names are not used, but instead the formulae are referred to as "products of trigonometric functions" [Bartsch] - see Figure 6-3.

$\sin \alpha \sin \beta$	=	$\frac{1}{2} [\cos (\alpha - \beta) - \cos (\alpha + \beta)]$
$\cos \alpha \cos \beta$	=	$\frac{1}{2} [\cos (\alpha - \beta) + \cos (\alpha + \beta)]$
$\sin \alpha \cos \beta$	=	$\frac{1}{2} [\sin (\alpha + \beta) + \sin (\alpha - \beta)]$
$\cos \alpha \sin \beta$	=	$\frac{1}{2} [\sin (\alpha + \beta) - \sin (\alpha - \beta)]$

**Figure 6-3 The Prosthaphaeretic formulae as "products of trigonometric functions" = Figure 6-1.**

The formulae used by Johannes Werner and Tycho Brahe and/or Paul Wittich differ from each other and therefore suggest a different, possibly independent, line of development. Whereas Werner works

### PROSTHAPHAERESIS AND JOHANNES WERNER (1468 - 1522)

By Klaus Kuehn and Jerry McCarthy

with the more elegant *Sinus Versus* (see Formula 1) Brahe only uses the sine function (see Formula 2) - [Björnbo, page 169].

**Formula 1:**

$$\frac{\sin(90^\circ - a + c) - \sin(90^\circ - a - c)}{2} = \frac{r}{\sin \text{vers}(180^\circ - B)}$$

with  $r = 1$ ;  $a$ ;  $b$ ;  $c$  = angles;  $B$  = side of the triangle

**Formula 2:**

$$\frac{\sin(90^\circ - a + c) - \sin(90^\circ - a - c)}{\sin(90^\circ - b) - \frac{\sin(90^\circ - a + c) - \sin(90^\circ - a - c)}{2}} = \frac{r}{\sin(90^\circ - B)}$$

with  $r = 1$ ;  $a$ ;  $b$ ;  $c$  = angles;  $B$  = side of the triangle

By reformulating Formula 1 [Björnbo; Page 166] Werner finally arrives at Formula 3 (for  $a+c < 90^\circ$ ) and at Formula 4 (for  $a+c > 90^\circ$ ). For these, he used the sine form; he did not use cosine functions.

**Formula 3:**

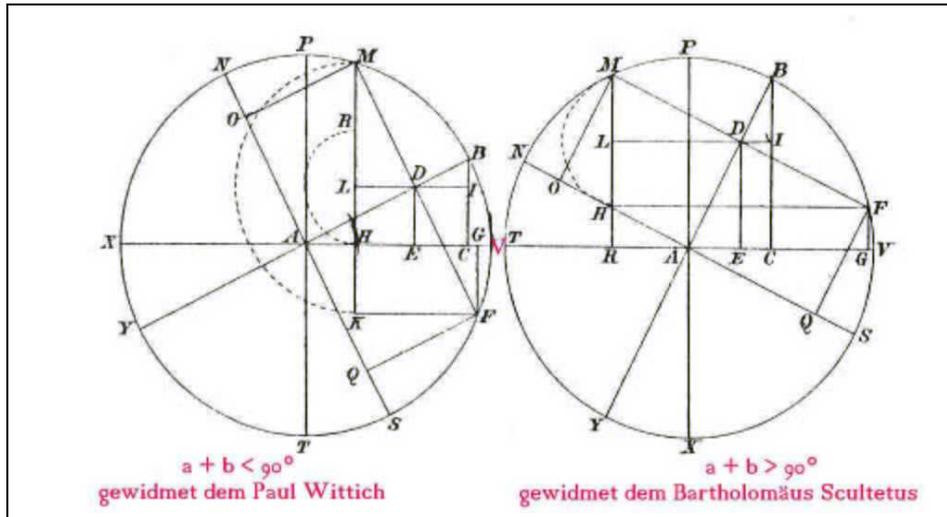
$$\sin a \cdot \sin c = \frac{1}{2} \{ \sin((90^\circ - a) + c) - \sin((90^\circ - c) - a) \}$$

**Formula 4:**

$$\sin a \cdot \sin c = \frac{1}{2} \{ \sin((90^\circ - a) + c) + \sin(a - (90^\circ - c)) \}$$

with  $a$ ;  $c$  = angles

For the geometrical proof of the prosthaphaeretic formulae we go back to the remarks of Anton von Braunmühl [von Braunmühl 1900, page 195].



**Figure 6-4 from Nikolaus Raymarus Ursus “Fundamentum astronomicum” 1588 (dedicated to Paul Wittich and Bartholomäus Scultetus)**

Ursus formulated the two acknowledgments above.

In both figures arc  $BV = a$ , and arc  $SF = \text{arc } MN = b$ .  $FDM$  is perpendicular to  $AB$ .

$BC$ ,  $DE$ ,  $FG$  and  $MH$  are perpendiculars dropped onto  $AV$ .

In the left picture,  $HK = FG = MR$ , in the right  $HR = FG$ , and in both cases  $MO$  and  $FQ$  are perpendiculars dropped on  $NS$ , which runs parallel to  $MF$ .

In the left picture, with  $DLJ$  parallel to  $AV$ , arc  $VM = 90^\circ - b + a$  and arc  $VF = 90^\circ - b - a$ ;

$MH = \sin(90^\circ - b + a)$ ;  $FG = HK = MR = \sin(90^\circ - b - a)$ .

With  $LH = DE = \frac{1}{2} RH = \frac{1}{2} (MH - MR) = \frac{1}{2} \{ \sin(90^\circ - b + a) - \sin(90^\circ - b - a) \}$ .

Furthermore  $BC = \sin a$  and  $AD = FQ = \sin b$  and also  $AB: AD = BC: DE$  and also  $AB = \text{Sinus totus (Sintot)}$

$$\text{Sintot: } \sin b = \sin a: \frac{1}{2} \{ \sin(90^\circ - b + a) - \sin(90^\circ - b - a) \}$$

and from the second figure follows similarly:

$$\text{Sintot: } \cos b = \cos a: \frac{1}{2} \{ \sin(b + 90^\circ - a) - \sin(b - 90^\circ + a) \}$$

In the following we present another geometrical proof from the work of Anton von Braunmühl [von Braunmühl 1897, page 26 and von Braunmühl 1900, page 39, 63].

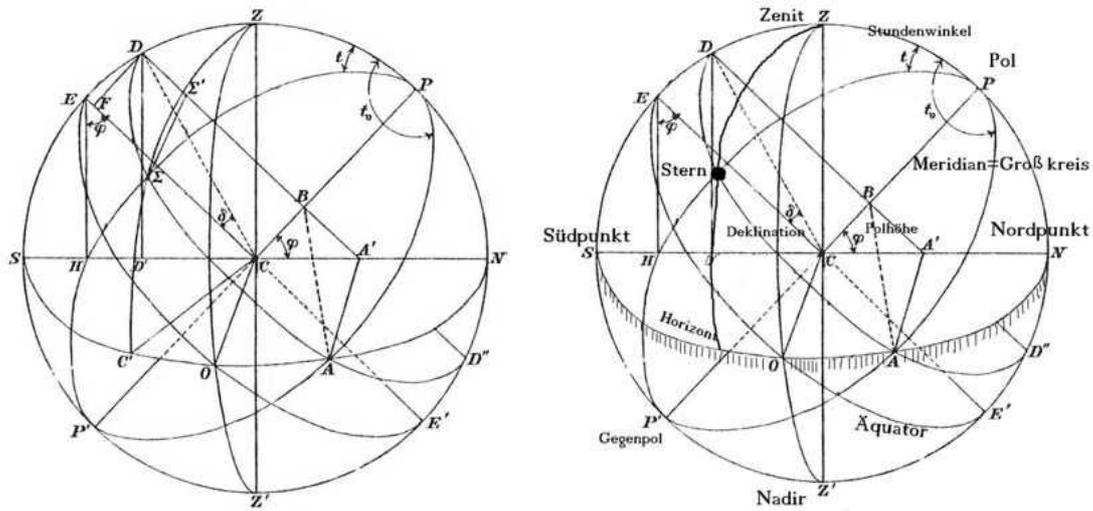


Figure 6-5 schematically drawn sphere with the axes of the horizontal and equatorial coordinates (ZZ' and PP') - the right figure shows a simplified version, with labels added.

In Figure 6-5 we recognise two angles which play an important role in astronomy: Angle  $\sphericalangle DCE = \delta =$  declination and angle  $\sphericalangle PCN = \varphi =$  height of the pole.

On the basis of these two angles the prosthaphaeretic formula can be deduced, if the diagram of the sphere is orthogonally projected onto the meridian SZN; this is a method which Arabic mathematicians used during their astronomical investigations. See Figure 6-6.

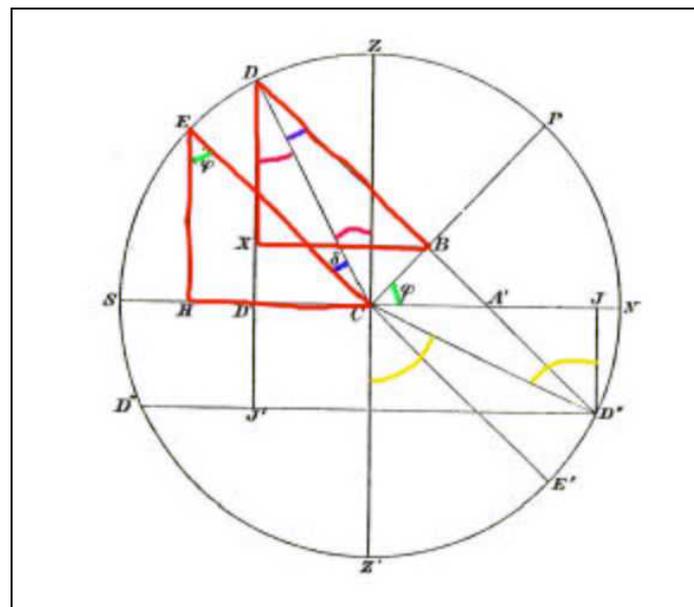


Figure 6-6 the projection of Figure 6-5 on the Meridian

And now for the proof of prosthaphaeresis:

From Figure 6-6 angle  $\sphericalangle DCZ = \varphi - \delta$ , therefore  $DD' = \cos(\varphi - \delta)$  and angle  $\sphericalangle D''CZ' = \varphi + \delta$ , and therefore  $D'I = \cos(\varphi + \delta)$ .

If one draws  $D''D'''$  parallel to NS, which the extension of  $DD'$  cuts at  $J'$ , then  $DJ' = \cos(\varphi - \delta) + \cos(\varphi + \delta)$  and if  $BX$  is drawn parallel to NS, then  $DX = \frac{1}{2}[(\cos(\varphi - \delta) + \cos(\varphi + \delta))]$ .

As  $DBX$  and  $ECH$  are similar triangles, it follows that

$$\frac{BD}{DX} = \frac{EC}{EH}$$

or in the case of the unit circle with  $EC = 1$ , the result is  $EH \cdot BD = DX$ .

With  $BD = \cos \delta$  and  $EH = \cos \varphi$  this equation becomes Formula 5:

$$\text{Formula 5: } \cos \varphi \cdot \cos \delta = \frac{1}{2}[(\cos(\varphi - \delta) + \cos(\varphi + \delta))]$$

Simpson [Simpson, page 120] presented a trigonometric method to convert the four prosthaphaeretic formulae into one another.

For example, to show  $\{\sin X \cdot \sin Y\}$  as sum:

With  $\varphi = 90^\circ - X$  and  $\delta = 90^\circ - Y$ , then from formula 5 we get

$$\cos(90^\circ - X) \cdot \cos(90^\circ - Y) = \frac{1}{2}[(\cos(90^\circ - X - (90^\circ - Y)) + \cos(90^\circ - X + 90^\circ - Y))]$$

$$\sin X \cdot \sin Y = \frac{1}{2}[(\cos(-X + Y) + \cos(180^\circ - X - Y))]$$

$$\sin X \cdot \sin Y = \frac{1}{2}[(\cos(-(X - Y)) + \cos(180^\circ - (X + Y)))]$$

with  $\cos(-Z) = \cos Z$  and  $\cos(180^\circ - Z) = -\cos Z$  it follows that:

$$\text{Formula 6: } \sin X \cdot \sin Y = \frac{1}{2}[(\cos(X - Y) - \cos(X + Y))]$$

Another method makes use of the addition theorems [Enzykl]:

$$\sin(a + b) = \sin a \cos b + \sin b \cos a + \sin(a - b) = \sin a \cos b - \sin b \cos a$$

$$= [\sin(a + b) + \sin(a - b)] = 2 \sin a \cos b \quad \text{or}$$

**Formula 7:  $\sin a \cdot \cos b = \frac{1}{2}[\sin(a + b) + \sin(a - b)] = A \cdot B$**  with  $A$  and  $B$  being the numeri for  $\sin a$  and  $\cos b$ .

With these easily understandable transformations of the various formulae, it might be hard to imagine that Johannes Werner did not know these methods.

To the extent that a distinction can be made between the discovery of the prosthaphaeretic formulae, and their application as prosthaphaeretic computing methods - that distinction can be designated (as does [Thoren]) as speculative and redundant. See also [Björnbo, page 157].

## 7 Applications

As a first application, an example of a multiplication of the numbers 0.6157 and 0.9397 is shown with one of the formulae shown in Figure 7 above, here restated:

$$A \cdot B = \sin a \cdot \cos b = \frac{1}{2} [\sin (a + b) + \sin (a - b)]$$

with the factors  $A = \sin a = 0.6157$  and  $B = \cos b = 0.9397$  [Enzykl, page 70]. From the table in Fig 7-1 we read for factor  $\sin a$  an angle of  $a = 38^\circ$  in the **green** grads (degrees) column, and for  $\cos b$  an angle of  $b = 20^\circ$  from the **red** inverted grads (degrees) column (see **red** ellipses).

Grad	sin	tan		Grad	sin	tan	
0	0,0000	0,0000	90	45	0,7071	1,000	45
1	0175	0175	89	46	7193	036	44
2	0349	0349	88	47	7314	072	43
3	0523	0524	87	48	7431	111	42
4	0698	0699	86	49	7547	150	41
5	0872	0875	85	50	0,7660	1,192	40
6	1045	1051	84	51	7771	235	39
7	1219	1228	83	52	7880	280	38
8	1392	1405	82	53	7986	327	37
9	1564	1584	81	54	8090	376	36
10	0,1736	0,1763	80	55	8192	428	35
11	1908	1944	79	56	8290	483	34
12	2079	2126	78	57	8387	540	33
13	2250	2309	77	58	8480	600	32
14	2419	2493	76	59	8572	664	31
15	2588	2679	75	60	0,8660	1,732	30
16	2756	2867	74	61	8746	804	29
17	2924	3057	73	62	8829	881	28
18	3090	3249	72	63	8910	963	27
19	3256	3443	71	64	8988	2,050	26
20	0,3420	0,3640	70	65	9063	145	25
21	3584	3839	69	66	9135	246	24
22	3746	4040	68	67	9205	356	23
23	3907	4245	67	68	9272	475	22
24	4067	4452	66	69	9336	605	21
25	4226	4663	65	70	0,9397	2,747	20
26	4384	4877	64	71	9455	904	19
27	4540	5095	63	72	9511	3,078	18
28	4695	5317	62	73	9563	271	17
29	4848	5543	61	74	9613	487	16
30	0,5000	0,5774	60	75	9659	732	15
31	5150	6009	59	76	9703	4,011	14
32	5299	6249	58	77	9744	331	13
33	5446	6494	57	78	9781	705	12
34	5592	6745	56	79	9816	5,145	11
35	5736	7002	55	80	0,9848	5,671	10
36	5878	7265	54	81	9877	6,314	9
37	6018	7536	53	82	9903	7,115	8
38	6157	7813	52	83	9925	8,144	7
39	6293	8098	51	84	9945	9,514	6
40	0,6428	0,8391	50	85	9962	11,43	5
41	6561	8693	49	86	9976	14,30	4
42	6691	9004	48	87	9986	19,08	3
43	6820	9325	47	88	9994	28,64	2
44	6947	9657	46	89	9998	57,29	1
45	7071	1,0000	45	90	1,0000	∞	0

That is, for the two figures in the **blue** boxes we see the results for  $a + b = 58^\circ$  and for  $a - b = 18^\circ$ .

With  $\sin 58^\circ = 0.8480$  and  $\sin 18^\circ = 0.3090$  their sum is 1.1570. Halving this gives 0.5786, which is the correct product of  $0.6157 \cdot 0.9397$  to 4 places (to be more exact: 0.57857329).

It is easy to recognise that using a sine table with higher precision will result in a higher accuracy.

Using Regiomontanus' seven-figure tables from his sine tables of 1541 we find  $\sin 18^\circ = 0.3090170$  and  $\sin 58^\circ = 0.8480481$ , giving a sum of 1.1570651; halving that value gives a result of 0.578532550 – a value now quite close to the real product.

Figure 7-1 four-figure table from [Enzykl, page 805]

It is also possible to do division in this manner. Replacing  $\cos b$  by  $1/\sec b$  and thereby getting another angle for  $b$ , it can be further calculated with the right side of the formula 7. An example for this is in [Sher].

As the connoisseur can imagine, it is also possible to reverse this process to, for example, calculate an addition by using a multiplication. This method is very geeky, but might be of theoretical interest to a slide rule user!

George Ludwig FROBENIUS (25.8.1566 in Iphofen - 21.7.1645 in Hamburg) was a Polyhistor (Universal scholar), a mathematician, a bookseller and a Hamburg publisher.

He lived in a time of change in computing methods as used in astronomical applications.

These circumstances were shown in his *Clavis Universi Trigonometrica* [Frobenius] in which arithmetical examples of the known methods of calculation were presented.

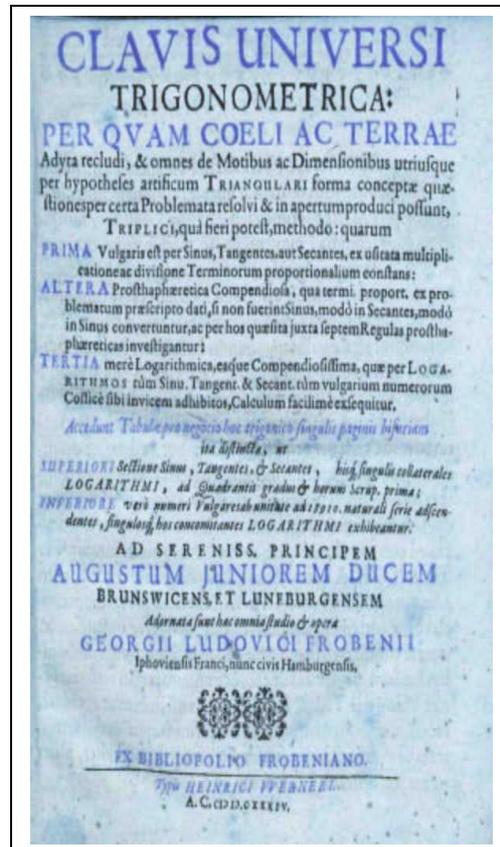


Figure 7-2 2nd title page Frobenius

Frobenius used three methods, which he named

- “Prima (1<sup>st</sup>)” or “Vulgaris”,
- “Altera (2<sup>nd</sup>)” or “Prosthaphaeretice”
- “Tertia (3<sup>rd</sup>)” or “Logarithmica”.

In the following examples, the three different methods are demonstrated and described to demonstrate the computation of an elevation, which results from the cutting across two diameters (great circles around a sphere). The two diameters are taken from astronomy (spherical trigonometry) and represent the equator and the diameter of the Earth in line with the ecliptic.

TRIGONOMETRIA SPHÆRICORUM: 43

# TRIGONOMETRIÆ PRACTICÆ,

## SECTIO ALTERA.

### PROBLEMATUM XXVI TRIANGULORUM

Sphæricorum analyfin spectantia continens.

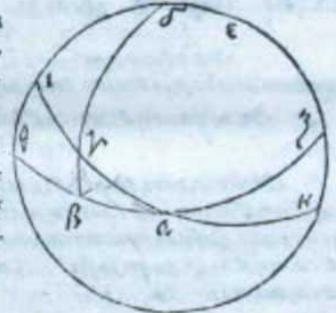
#### PRIMUM PROBLEMA.

TRIANGULI Sphærici rectanguli datâ, præter rectum, Basem  
cum Angulo ad Basin obliquo, CR US dato angulo subtensum in-  
venire, Modis sex, & horum singulos trifariam absolvere, *Vulgariter,*  
*Prosthaphæreticè & Logarithmicè.*

PRIMUS MODUS.

Ut Sinus totus est ad Sinum Basis: Ita  
Sinus anguli dati ad Sinum Cruris oppositi.

*16 p. 4. Regiom. 3. c. 14. Ft. m. p. 12. c. 4. L. 2. probl. 41.  
p. Clav. de triang. Sphæric.*



EXEMPLUM: Dantur in præsentis Triang.  
 $\gamma\beta a$  Sphærico rectang. præter Rectum ad  $\beta$ , basis  
 $\alpha\gamma$  arcus Eclipticæ 30. gr. 8. pr. 55. sec. & angulus  
 $\gamma a\beta$  obliquitatis Eclipticæ hoc est 23. gr. 31. pr.  
30. sec: Quæritur Cruris  $\beta\gamma$ .

VULGARITER.

T.P. $\gamma\beta a$ 90. gr.	$\gamma a$ 30. gr. 8. pr. 55. sec.	$\gamma a\beta$ 23. gr. 31. pr. 30. sec.
Si. 10,000,000	Si. 5,022,446	Si. 3,991,492. (Si Eclip.

*Quartus 2,004,705. Sinus: Ejus arcus 11. gr. 33. pr. 52. sec. Cruris  $\beta\gamma$ . Declinat. dati pun-*

PROSTHAPHÆRETICÆ. Consultatur PRIMA Regula Prosthaphæreticæ.

Arcus major 30. gr. 8. pr. 55. sec. Compl. 59. gr. 51. pr. 5. sec.		
Arcus minor. 23. 31. 30. - - - 23. 31. 30.		
Aggreg. 83. 22. 35. Sin. 9,933,253.		
Differ. 36. 19. 35. Sin. 5,923,839 subtr.		
		Differ. 4,009,414.
		Semis 2,004,707 Sinus, hujus arcus est
		F 2 <span style="float: right;">Loga,</span>

*11. gr. 33. pr. 52. sec. Cruris  $\beta\gamma$ .*

44 TRIGONOMETRIA SPHÆRICORUM.

LOGARITHMICÆ: Ut Logarithmus Sinus anguli recti est ad Logarithmum  
Sinus Basis: Ita Logarithmus Sinus anguli, ad Logarithmum Sinus Cruris  
quæriti.

EXEM. T.P.  $\gamma\beta a$  90. gr.  $\gamma a$  30. gr. 8. pr. 55.  $\gamma a\beta$  23. gr. 31. pr. 30. sec.

Log. Si. 10,000,000	Log. Si. 9,700,915	Log. Si. 9,601,136.
		9,601,136 -
		19,302,051
		10,000,000 -
		Log. Sinus 9,302,051: arcus 11. gr. 33. pr. 52. se. Cruris $\beta\gamma$ .

Figure 7-3 Example pages from Frobenius for the computation of a side in a spherical triangle

In the spherical triangle  $\alpha\beta\gamma$ , the angle  $\alpha$  opposite the side  $\beta\gamma$  is to be computed.

Two angles and the side opposite the other angle ( $\beta$ ) are given.

The characteristic (and simplification) is that this concerns a right-angled spherical triangle; the right angle ( $90^\circ$ ) is at the angle  $\beta$ .

For the computation of the side  $\beta\gamma$ , the sine rule is applicable; within a right-angled spherical triangle this is expressed as the

$$\text{Sine rule: } \sin a = \sin \alpha \cdot \sin \gamma a / \sin \beta$$

In Frobenius' example, the angle  $\alpha$  has a value of 23 degrees, 31 minutes and 30 seconds - the angle of the ecliptic. The side  $\gamma a$  has a value of 30 degrees, 8 minutes and 55 Seconds. Because  $\sin \beta = \sin 90^\circ = 1$ , the formula simplifies to:

$$\sin a = \sin \alpha \cdot \sin \gamma a$$

Following the first "Vulgariter" method, the results of the calculation process are presented in table 7-1:

**Table 7-1 Calculation method using multiplication of sines <sup>4</sup>**

1. Vulgariter	Angle/Side	Trig Funct	Degree	Pr	Sec
	$\alpha$		23	31	30
	$\gamma a = b$		30	8	55
	$\beta$		90		
	Si $\alpha$	3.991.492			
		times			
	Si $\gamma a$	5.022.446			
		divided by			
	S.t. (sinus totus = $\beta$ )	10.000.000			
		equals			
	Quartus = si $\alpha$ x si $\gamma a$	2.004.705			
<b>Solution:</b>	Sinus: arcus ejus		11	33	52
					Crus $\beta\gamma$

According to this method the seven-place sines of the angles were determined and **multiplied** with one another.

The solution for the side  $\beta\gamma = a$  gives: 11 degrees, 33 minutes 52 seconds.

The 2nd method is "Prosthaphaeretic", which works according to the following formula:

$$\sin \gamma a \cdot \sin \alpha = \frac{1}{2} \{ \sin ((90^\circ - \gamma a) + \alpha) - \sin ((90^\circ - \alpha) - \gamma a) \}$$

**Table 7-2 Calculation method using Prosthaphaeresis**

2. Prosthaphaeretice	Angle/Side	Degree	Pr	Sec		Degree	Pr	Sec	Sinus	Arcus	Grad	Pr	Sec
$\gamma a$	Arcus Major	30	8	55	Compl $\gamma a$	59	51	5					
$\alpha$	Arcus Minor	23	31	30	$\alpha$	23	31	30					
					plus	Aggreg.	83	22	35	9,933,253			
					minus	Differ.	36	19	35	5,923,843			
									Differ.	4,009,410			
									divided by 2				
<b>Solution:</b>						Crus $\beta\gamma$			Semis	2,004,705	11	33	52

<sup>4</sup> It should be mentioned here that the trigonometric calculations from Frobenius are based on sinus totus =  $\sin 90^\circ = 10^7$

In table 7-2 the calculation method is shown, in which the result is calculated using the prosthaphaeretic formula. To remind the reader: the product to be computed ( $\sin \gamma \alpha$  times  $\sin \alpha$ ) can be computed by the **Addition and Subtraction** of Sines. Only at the conclusion there is an additional, simple, division (Semis) by 2. We see here a somewhat elaborate calculation process like the above Vulgariter method; however simpler calculation steps are used.

The simplest and fastest way for the computation of the height is the logarithmic method shown in table 7-3. In addition it was necessary, to look up the logarithms associated with the sines and **add and/or subtract** these. The use of suitable tables was trusted by astronomers of that time, because there already existed appropriate tables for the trigonometric functions and for their logarithms.

**Table 7-3 Calculation method using Logarithms**

3. Logarithmice	Angle/Side	Degree	Pr	Sec	SIN (:10^7)	log sin <	log sin (+10)	Degree	Pr	Sec
	$\alpha$	23	31	30	0,3991492	-0,39886476	9,60113524			
	$\gamma\alpha$	30	8	55	0,5022445	-0,29908475	plus 9,70091525			
	$\beta$	90			1,0000000	minus 10,00000000				
Solution:						Crus $\beta\gamma$	9,30205049	11	33	52

Frobenius had included a detailed table (see Figure 7-4) in his comprehensive *Clavis Universi Trigonometrica* (323 pages text book plus 184 pages of tables); in this table, sines as well as tangents and secants, and their logarithms, for each minute of angle are exactly set down. Additionally, the Briggsian logarithms of the numbers are tabulated.

**Sinus. =  
SIN =  
10<sup>7</sup> sin**

**Logarithm. =  
LOG (SIN) =  
10<sup>7</sup> + 10<sup>7</sup> log sin =  
10<sup>7</sup> (1 + log (sin))**

**Figure 7-4: Excerpt from a table by [Frobenius] showing 23 degrees and 31 minutes.**





Figure 7-6: continuation of the proof and construction guidance for the prosthaphaeretic slide rule

$$\overline{OV} = \frac{\cos(A+B) + \cos(A-B)}{2}$$

Using right triangle trigonometry on triangle OVR, we get  $\overline{OV} = \overline{OR} \cos A = \cos B \cos A$  (since  $\overline{OR} = \cos B$  from right triangle trigonometry on ORP). Thus,

$$\cos A \cos B = \overline{OV} = \frac{\cos(A+B) + \cos(A-B)}{2}.$$

Figure 2 shows that similar triangles can also justify the design of our device. The proof uses the fact that the ratio of  $b$  to 1 is the same as the ratio of  $ab$  to  $a$ .

### CONSTRUCTING THE PROSTHAPHAERETIC SLIDE RULE

Figure 1 now tells us how to multiply two numbers that lie between zero and one. Notice that  $(\overline{OX})(\overline{OR}) = \overline{OV}$ , since  $\overline{OX} = \cos A$ ,  $\overline{OR} = \cos B$  and  $\overline{OV} = \cos A \cos B$ . If we let  $\overline{OX} = a$ ,  $\overline{OR} = b$ , and remove the now unnecessary parts of Figure 1, we get Figure 2.

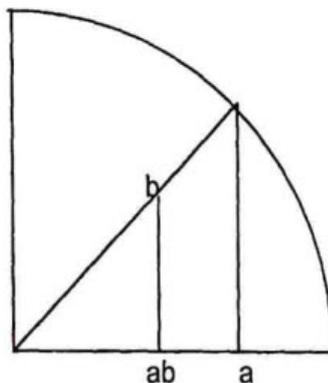


Figure 2

This figure shows how to construct the device:

- 1) Draw the first quadrant of the unit circle on a square surface. On the horizontal axis place a unit scale where 0 is at the origin and 1 is the radius of the unit circle. Subdivide the scale as finely as possible (tenths, hundredths, etc.)
- 2) Attach a rotor at the origin which has the same scale on it as the horizontal axis. The zero on this scale must be at the origin.
- 3) Attach to the square surface a slider that maintains a line perpendicular to the horizontal axis and can be moved left and right (much like the slider on a slide rule) always maintaining its perpendicularity.

Figure 7-7 application of the prosthaphaeretic slide rule

The result is as follows:

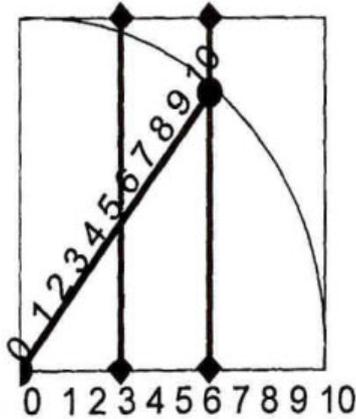


Figure 3: Scales in tenths

We can now see that multiplying two numbers between 0 and 1 is easy. Let's do  $0.6 \times 0.5$  as an example.

- 1) Position the slider so that it passes through 0.6 on the horizontal axis.
- 2) Position the rotor so that its 1 coincides with the slider.
- 3) Without disturbing the rotor's position, move the slider until it passes through 0.5 on the rotor's scale.
- 4) The product (0.3) is at the intersection of the slider and the horizontal axis.

As Example 1 shows, any multiplication can be reduced to multiplying a pair of numbers between 0 and 1 and then adjusting the decimal point.

The device also does divisions. As an example of how to do  $\frac{y}{x}$  when  $0 < y < x < 1$ , let's do  $0.3 \div 0.5$ .

- 1) Position the slider so that its vertical line passes through 0.3 on the horizontal axis.
- 2) Position the rotor so that 0.5 on its scale coincides with the slider.
- 3) Without disturbing the rotor's position, move the slider until it passes through 1 on the rotor's scale.
- 4) The answer (0.6) is at the intersection of the slider and the horizontal axis.

Figure 3 contained in Figure 7-7 points to the application of the intercept theorems, convenient for doing calculation by proportions, and one has thereby naturally removed oneself far from actual Prosthaphaeresis. Therefore, the above written steps represent the geometrical transition of the prosthaphaeretic formulae to intercept theorems.

Thus it is not surprising, that some computing devices, well-known for some time, use this principle of the so-called “prosthaphaeretic slide rule”, without having anything to do with either Prosthaphaeresis or with logarithms (as used on slide rules).

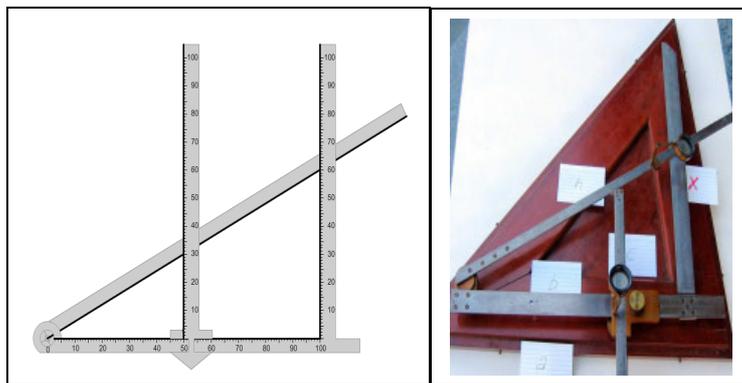
For example, in 1914, M. Cashmore in England already had a patent for a technically quite beautiful looking proportional computer, which was patented under GB 1914-13073 and is described in details in the online computer encyclopaedia [Relex].

The Flash Animation, which can be seen there, shows the computing principle of this proportional computer impressively.

During the operation of this, there is no computational meaning assigned to the hypotenuse. However, Sher and Nataro [Sher], using their method, read the output from the hypotenuse, because they extract the cosines of the angles A and B.

Cashmore receives his multiplication result on the movable opposite side of the triangle after only one rotation. Such an application of intercept theorem thus brings a simplification.

However, according to a comment by a well-known lady Mathematician, "the Prosthaphaeretic Slide rule has about as much to do with Prosthaphaeresis as a set-square has with a Toblerone box."



**Figure 7-8 computing principle of the Cashmore of proportional computer [from Relex]**

According to the intercept theorems, the following is valid:

$$a/b = X/c$$

With **a** having unit value (1 or 10 or 100), it follows that:

$$c/b = X/1$$

$$\text{Or } c = X \cdot b$$

It is necessary to consider the decimal places of the results. So, for example, in Figure 7-8:

$$X = 60, b = 50, \text{ results in } c = 30 \cdot 100 = 3000.$$

Since the 17th Century, proportional calculating instruments, such as the sector and the proportional divider/circle developed by Jost Bürgi, make wide-spread appearances.

Nicholas Rose [Rose] has described further applications of Prosthaphaeresis. In one such, he applies Prosthaphaeresis to music, to explain the theory of vibrations and beats; in another, he explains why it is not possible to receive high-fidelity reproduction using a signal from a medium-wave transmitter.

The prosthaphaeretic method was used for about hundred years with great success, because it represented a considerable aid to computation. Moreover, to judge from the works of Longomontan and Frobenius [Frobenius], several mathematicians continued to use their trusted Prosthaphaeresis even after the publication of the logarithms.

Others however concerned themselves with the logarithms and valued their use very highly: The astronomer and mathematician Marquis Pierre-Simon de Laplace (1749 – 1827) claims that

*“The invention of the logarithms shortens calculations which might have lasted for months, to a few days, doubling thereby the life of the (human) computers.”*

Moreover, the application of prosthaphaeresis had been able to contribute for some decades and it may have been the trigger for the emergence of logarithms, because John Napier (1550-1617) and Jost Bürgi (1552 - 1632), the inventors of logarithms, were users of prosthaphaeresis. Bürgi used prosthaphaeresis for his computations concerning his observations of Mars around 1590 [Faustmann]. According to Volker Bialas [Bialas] Johannes Kepler (1571-1630) also used prosthaphaeresis for his calculations for his “Epitome Astronomiae Copernicanae” (Outline of Copernican Astronomy - 1618/1621).

## 8 Time tables and Summary

### Prosthaphaeresis text history time table (after Björnbo 1907)

Year	Event	Björnbo B Page #; v. Braunmühl vB Page#
6.06.1436	Johannes Mueller is born in Königsberg near Hassfurt (Johann de Monte Regio; Regiomontanus), was for 15 years a student under Georg Peurbach.	vB118
1446	Sebald Schreyer, a patron of Werner, is born	B153
1468	Cardinal Matthäus Lang, Bishop of Gurk, is born, thereafter he became Archbishop of Salzburg; Sponsor of Werner (died 1540).	B153
<b>14.02.1468</b>	<b>Johannes Werner born in Nuremberg.</b>	<b>B150</b>
1470	Willibald Pierckheimer born in Nuremberg born; Patron of Werner; a member of a group of Nuremberg humanists.	B153
6.07.1476	Johannes Regiomontanus dies in Rome: "his work was so great that he towers above his contemporaries and stands as a milestone marking the beginning of the new age"	vB119
1477	Johannes Schöner born.	B153
1489	Georg Hartmann born	B158
1493 - 1497/8	Werner goes to Italy - interestingly, the catalogue entry for the Cod Reg. in 1259 carries the year 1495; however, this cannot be correct in that quotations from later dates are included within it. (It is possible, however, that these were inserted later).	B150
1497/8	Johannes Werner returns to Nuremberg and becomes a parish priest there.	B150
1504	The year of Bernhard Walther's death, who administered the legacy of Regiomontanus ("kept fearfully locked away").  Early in this year, Werner gains access to Regiomontanus' work, and expresses his annoyance that he needed so much time in his hometown of Nuremberg (in which Walther lived and Regiomontanus worked) before he could gain this access.	B173; vB132
1505	Starting from this year, Werner's work was drawn up and his friend and patron Willibald Pirkheimer acquired the triangle books of Regiomontanus (and probably passed them on to Werner). Werner does not give any reference to Regiomontanus' work in his own work. He mentions however Euclid, Menelaus, Theodosios, Geber and Georg von Peurbach and it seems likely, given that their work formed the basis of what Regiomontanus had written, that this is probably why Werner did not give any references to Regiomontanus' work.  <b>However, we know the carelessness of those times in the taking of sufficient care of intellectual property rights, to assume with good reason that Werner might have absorbed some of Regiomontanus's work into his own trigonometry books, using a handed-down original. As an example of this, the transformation of Regiomontanus's Cosine Rule by the invention of the so-called prosthaphaeretic method, albeit that the former was from a much earlier time, became Werner's intellectual property. "</b>	B172, B173; vB135
1505-1513	Werner writes his 5 books concerning spherical triangles ( <i>Liber de triangulis sphaericis</i> ) - <i>Spherical trigonometry in 5 books under the title "De triangulis per maximorum circulorum segmenta constructis libri V", for which he unfortunately found no publisher.</i>	B157; vB133
1514	Werner has now been a parish priest for 16 years; this is the year of appearance of his first compilation.	B150
1514	George Joachim Rheticus born.	B158
1516	Konrad Gessner born.	B158
1446	Sebald Schreyer, a patron of Werner, died.	B153
1522	Werner's second compilation appears, including his work after 1513; Title: In hoc opere haec continentur. Libellus Ioannis Veneri Nurembergen. Super vigintiduobus elementis conicis. Ejusdem: Commentarius seu paraphrastica enarratio in undecim modos conficiendi eius problematis quod cubi duplicatio dicitur etc etc.	B153; See Title page from the Internet
1522	Johannes Stabius, Viennese mathematician and Imperial Historiographer; Patron of Werner, with whose help the 1514 compilation appeared, died.	B153
1525	Kaspar Wolf born.	B158
1525-1522	Werner is now a priest at the cemetery of St. Johannes	B151
<b>1522</b>	<b>Johannes Werner dies in Nuremberg, without one of his works ever having appeared in print.</b>	<b>B150, B157</b>
1530	Willibald Pierckheimer dies in Nuremberg.	B153
1533	There appears a new publication by Peter Apian of his <i>Introductio Geographica</i>	B158

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	together with a letter from the year 1532, which he received from Johann Wilhelm of Loubenberg, with the request that his own book on the subject of Meteoroscopy be permitted to be published, which happens. It is supposed that Apian's Work is a compilation from Werner's first two books.	
1537	Johann Richter (also known as Praetorius) is born.	B170
1542	During a visit to Nuremberg, Hartmann hands over Werner's written legacy to Rheticus (according to Doppelmayr 1730); this legacy is described as disordered sheets of paper, like the rubble of a shipwreck.	B158, B160; vB133
1546	Publication of Werner's <i>Metereologi Canones</i> by Schöner	B153
1546	Tycho Brahe born	B165
1547	Johannes Schöner dies - <b>was to have published in 1557 in Neuburg a further Regiomontanus Work "Fundamentum Operationem..."</b>	B153; vB123
1554	Jakob Christmann born	B165
1555	Konrad Gessner, Bibliographer, says that the Nuremberg Mathematician and Mechanic Georg Hartmann saves Werner's six books concerning Meteoroscopy from destruction.	B158
1555?	Paul Wittich, future pupil of Tycho Brahe, born.	B167
1557	In Kraków a book appears, containing on its title page, the titles of the two Werner works, and giving as its publisher Rheticus - "Nunc Primum Editi" thus 1557 not published before 1557 (see the title page Figure 5.3 in the main text ) - found by Eneström in 1902 and Zebrowski in 1873.	B159
Note	Rheticus afforded Werner's work considerable respect and also indicates him as the source, which others (for example, Peter Apian) did not do. Moreover, it is assumed that Rheticus admitted that Werner's arrangement of the different triangle forms was the inspiration for his <i>Opus Palatinum</i> (1596).	B162
1564	George Hartmann dies	B158
1565	Konrad Gessner dies	B158
1566; 1568-1569; 1575	Brahe is in Wittenberg and could have seen Werner's work about triangles here. The formula used by Brahe and Wittich is identical with that which Reimers used; however it is not the same as Werner's, as the latter started with <i>Sinus Versus</i> .	B169
1568	Rheticus has completed half of his giant work <i>Opus Palatinum</i> .	B164
1569	Praetorius visits Rheticus in Kraków and sees the tables which appeared later in <i>Opus Palatinum</i> ; at the same time, he probably also had a look at Werner's 4 <sup>th</sup> book about Spherical Geometry.	B170
1571-1576	Praetorius is Professor of higher mathematics in Wittenberg	B170
1574 and 1583	Kaspar Wolf indicates in Gessner's new bibliography that, if he is not wrong, George Joachim Rheticus has edited the six books concerning <i>Meteoroscopy</i> and the four <i>de triangulis</i> books.	B158
1576	George Joachim Rheticus dies in Kaschau, Hungary - up to then the printed manuscript of Werner's works had been in his possession.	B158, B165
1576	L. Valentin Otho (born around 1550 in Magdeburg), the pupil of Rheticus, receives Rheticus' legacy (with Werner manuscripts) after his death.	B165
1580	"Re-invention" (according to v. Braunmühl) of Prosthaphaeresis by Tycho Brahe and Paul Wittich in Uranienborg on Hven.	B167, B168; vB193
1584	<b>In this year a certain Paul Wittich (1555? - 1587) comes to the court of Count Wilhelm IV (1532 - 1592) from Wroclaw; he had stayed with Tycho at Uranienburg from 1580 to 1581 and thereafter remains for a longer time in Kassel.</b>  <b>As reported by both Bürgi and Raymarus Ursus, he (Wittich) has the first case of the so-called Prosthaphaeretic Method, which as we have learned from P 135, was one of Werner's inventions. The astronomers at Kassel showed the Prosthaphaeretic Method to be a calculation method which was used for a long time at Uranienburg for astronomical calculations, albeit without proof.</b>  <b>Ursus goes on to explain that Bürgi found such a fruitful proof for this, that using it, the other prosthaphaeretic case and his (Ursus') proof, indeed the solution of all triangles by this method can be deduced by means of sines, tangents and secants.</b>	vB194; vB195
1587	Paul Wittich dies	B167
1588	Nicolai Reimers alias Nikolaus Raymarus Ursus publishes his <i>Fundamentum Astronomicum</i> in Strasbourg; in it Werner's Prosthaphaeresis work <b>(both prosthaphaeretic rules including their derivative in two diagrams)</b> is published for the first time.	B168, B171; vB195
1589/1590	Brahe complains in letters to Hayck that Nicolai Reimers has stolen his Prosthaphaeretic Formulae...	B168, B169
1590	... however without the appropriate mathematical proofs.  These formulae are received by Reimers from Jobst Bürgi in Kassel, to where they are allegedly brought by Paul Wittich.	B169

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1599	Nicolai Reimers dies.	B169
1599	<b>Johann Praetorius announces in his Cod. lat. monac. 24101 that Werner is the inventor of the prosthaphaeretic equation, which some certain pupil brought into a somewhat simplified form.</b>	vB137 Footnote 2
1601	Kaspar Wolf dies	B158
1601	Tycho Brahe dies	B165
1611	In Jakob Christmann's <i>Theoria Lunae</i> the two works of Werner are quoted and a form of the Prosthaphaeresis used, to find the angle B of the obtuse spherical triangle when sides a, b, c are known- "...and that he further explained the method described therein using three diagrams."	B165; vB136
1613	Jakob Christmann, professor, dies - (not in 1630 as indicated elsewhere).	B165
1616	Johann Richter alias Praetorius dies	B170
Between 1654 and 1689	Queen Christina receives Werner's manuscripts, which up till then had been in the possession of Jakob Christmann. After her death in 1689 the manuscript (Cod. Regin. 1259) lay largely un-noticed in the Vatican.	B171
1622	Longomontan has attributed the invention of the Prosthaphaeresis in his <i>Astronomica Danica</i> of 1622 (page 10) to Paul Wittich, and was thereby the reason that all historians who came later had the same opinion.  Rheticus had possession of Werner's manuscripts up to his death (1576) in Kraków and possibly used them as support for his " <i>Opus Palatinum</i> ".  The manuscript did not contain mathematical diagrams, which suggests that the document was provided as a printer's proof.  <b>As to the role of Jost Bürgi with his calculations using the prosthaphaeretic method and their proofs, there is probably more to be said!</b>	vB136 footnote 2          vB145  vB194ff
1622	<b>The method of the Prosthaphaeresis was so popular that it remained in use for a long time after the invention of the logarithms (1614). Such usage was recommended by the Dane Christian Severin Longomontan (1562 - 1647), who was a long-term assistant to Tycho and became, after the latter's death, a most enthusiastic Professor of Mathematics in Copenhagen.</b>  <b>In his "Astronomica Danica" of 1622, already mentioned above, he even gives the advantage which he sees over logarithms, (which were well-known to him). "because by using Prosthaphaeresis the Rule of Three can be carried out handling only the given data", while "the procedure with logarithms is too far removed from current proofs, which is more important perhaps to beginners".</b>	vB202
1634	<b>A proof for this, that astronomers could only with difficulty be separated from their beloved Prosthaphaeretic Method, is that Georg Ludwig Frobenius of Hamburg (1566 - 1645) published in 1634 his "Clavis Universi Trigonometrica" - exact title:</b>  "Clavis universi trigonometrica : per quam coeli ac terrae adyta recludi, et omnes de motibus ac dimensionibus utriusque per hypotheses artificum triangulari forma conceptae quaestiones per certa problemata resolvi et in apertum produci possunt, triplici, qua fieri potest, methodo ... ; Accedunt tabulae pro negotio hoc trigonico ... / studio & opera Georgii Ludovici Frobenii Iphoviensis Franci, nunc civis Hamburgensis "  <b>in which all examples are calculated using the common method as well as logarithms and prosthaphaeresis even though he recommends in his own opinion the use of logarithms, and warns against the use of prosthaphaeresis if functions other than sines should arise.</b>	vB203
1573	Seqvntvr Igitvr Nvnc Canones Tvm Mediorvm seu aequalium motuum, tum <b>Prosthaphaereon</b> : deniq[ue] alij Canones quorum Catalogus supra recitatus est; Reinhold, Erasmus 1573	University library Goettingen
1610	Tabvlae Arithmeticae <b>Prosthaphaereōs</b> Vniversales : Qvarvm Svbsidio Nvmervs Qvilibet, Ex Mvltiplicatione Prodcendvs, Per Solam Additionem: Et Qvotiens Qvilibet, E Divisione eliciendus, per solam subtractionem, sine taediosâ & lubricâ Multiplicationeis, atque Diuisionis operatione, etiam ab eo, quie Arithmetices non admodum sit gnarus, exactè, celeriter & nullo negotio inuenitur / E' Mvseo Ioannis Georgii Herwart Ab Hohenbvrg. ... Authors: Herwarth von Hohenburg, Johann Georg 1610	University library Goettingen
1822	Charles Hutton mentions in the introduction of the 5th edition of his Mathematical Tables (P. 4) John Werner of Nuremberg (1468-1528) as being the author of five books about triangles.	

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## Summary

In 1901 Axel Anthon Björnbo was working in the Vatican with the collected manuscripts “Joannis Veneri Norimbergensis de triangulis sphaericis” and “Joannis Veneri Norimbergensis de meteoroscopiis” in six books. He stated that this complete work (a copy) was copied by a mathematically uneducated scribe from a - probably hard to read - source.

It is certain that this is not one of Werner’s original manuscripts. However the confirmed contents list of this work confirms the assumption (v. Braunmühl, Heilbronner, Montuela, Eneström) that Johannes Werner is the father of the prosthaphaeresis method. vB141 footnote 1.

Werner is identified as the inventor of the prosthaphaeretic formula! He has certainly worked on it before-hand (1502 - possibly even 1495). However his work was never published, but fell into the hands of others (e.g. Rheticus) as a manuscript in a state which was disordered, contained errors, and was incomplete and illegible.

It is probable that Werner based his work on the developed (and available) work of Regiomontanus, without giving citations from it however.

Björnbo assumes that everything which Regiomontanus has gathered, Werner also admits. B172

"Already via Ibn Yunus (950 - 1009) - publisher of the hakimitic tables - we have found an application of the second of these formulae, and we do not doubt that the Arabs knew how to use it in various ways, although it is not possible for us to provide a direct proof for that opinion.

In no way however did Werner gain his knowledge of the Prosthaphaeretic Methods from him (Ibn Yunus), in that information on the subject is not to be found in those Arab writings which were well-known at that time. Therefore we must regard him as an independent inventor of the Prosthaphaeretic Methods which were so much used in the West."

The above statement concerning Ibn Yunus is in fact not correct, as D.A. King mentions on page 361: "This assertion is incorrect and it can be traced to Delmabre’s misunderstanding of the material in Chapter 15 of the Hakim Zij (the hakimitic tables)."

## 9 Contemporaries of Johannes Werner

and later scientists associated with prosthaphaeresis

<b>Name</b>	<b>Dates</b>
<b>Bernhard Walther</b>	1430 - 1504
<b>Johannes Müller / Regiomontan</b>	1436 - 1476
<b>Sebald Schreyer</b>	1446 - 1520
<b>Lorenz Beheim</b>	1457 - 1521
<b>Johannes Stabius</b>	1460 - 1522
<b>Erasmus Topler</b>	1462 - 1512
<b>Johannes Werner</b>	1468 - 1522
<b>Willibald Pirckheimer</b>	1470 - 1530
<b>Johannes Schöner</b>	1477 - 1547
<b>Christoph Scheurl II</b>	1481 - 1542
<b>Georg Hartmann</b>	1489 - 1564
<b>Peter Apian</b>	1495 - 1552
<b>Erasmus Reinhold</b>	1511 - 1553
<b>Georg Joachim Rheticus</b>	1514 - 1576
<b>Konrad Gessner</b>	1516 - 1576
<b>Kaspar Wolf</b>	1525 - 1601
<b>Bartholomäus Scultetus/Schulz</b>	1532 - 1614
<b>Christoph Clavius</b>	1537 - 1602
<b>Johann Richter / Prätorius</b>	1537 - 1616
<b>Tycho Brahe</b>	1546 - 1601
<b>Valentinus Otho</b>	1550 - 1605
<b>John Napier</b>	1550 - 1617
<b>Nicolaus Reimers / Ursus</b>	1551 - 1600
<b>Jost Bürgi</b>	1552 - 1632
<b>Jakob Christmann</b>	1554 - 1613
<b>Paul Wittich</b>	1555 - 1587
<b>Melchior Jöstel</b>	1559 - 1611
<b>Christian Severin Longomontan</b>	1562 - 1647
<b>Georg Ludwig Frobenius</b>	1566 - 1645
<b>Johannes Kepler</b>	1571 - 1630

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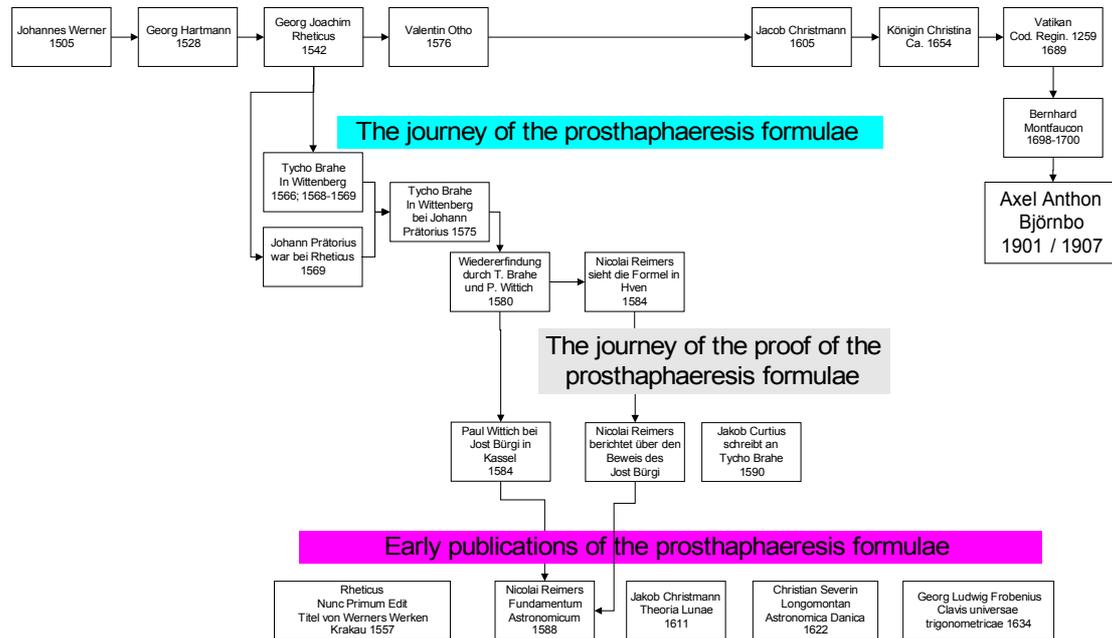
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## 11 The journey through history of the manuscript "De Triangulis Sphaericis Libri Quatuor"



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