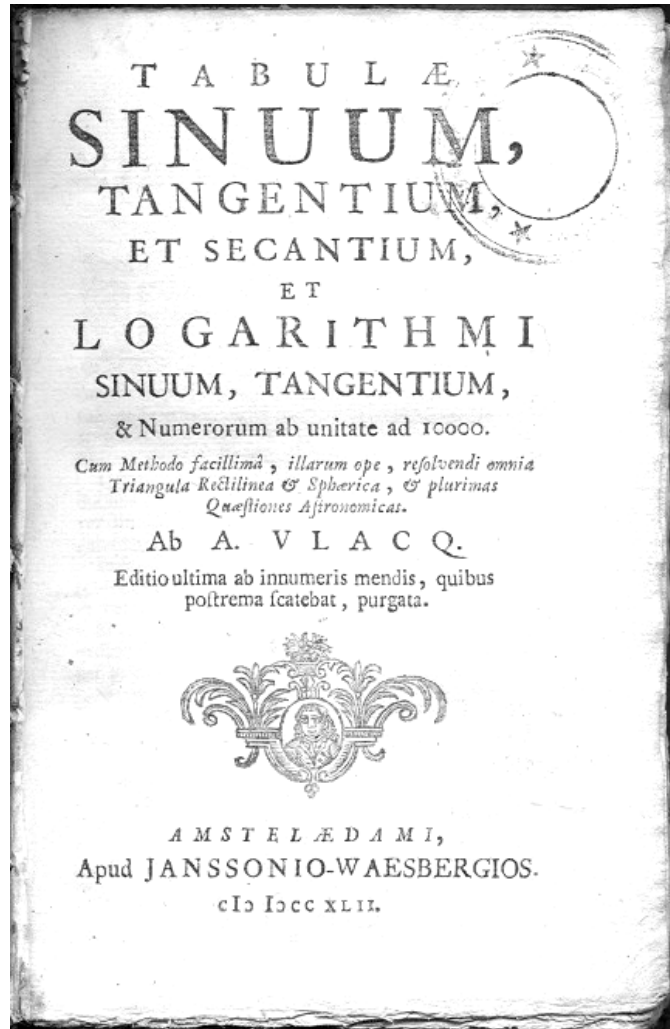My Special Item - Mein Besonderes Stück:

Vlacq Table of Logarithms, 1742

Acquired during April 2004 at the Dutch Circle stand in a collectors fair from a retired instrument maker at the Agricultural University of Wageningen.

Shown to the audience of IM2004 on 26 September 2004, according to the following

Principles of Collecting:

"with the acquisition of a special item, a collector acquires at the same time the responsibilities of its stewardship, to preserve the item well until a proper destination has been found for its next life, to assemble and keep knowledge about the object, and to share this with the community"

Numerous Years of Publication for Vlacq's Log Tables

(limited scan from Leiden Museums, Bierens de Haan and ZVAB/antiquarian bookhandlers)

1628 F-L (Arithm. Log. II)	**1706** G (10,000)	**1808** G (10,000)
1636 D (10 x 100,000)	**1721** Chinese Arithm. Log. II	**1821** G (10,000)
1651 F-L (100,000)	**1721** G (10,000)	
1657 D (100,000)	**1725** G (10,000)	
1658 D (7 x 10,000, octavo)	**1732** G (10,000)	
1661 D-F-G-L (10,000)	**1738** G (10,000)	
1665 D-F-G-L (100,000)	**1742** L (10,000)	
1666 F (100,000)	**1748** G (10,000)	LEGEND
1670 F (10,000 postuum)	**1757** G-L (10,000)	D=Dutch: "Nieuwe Konstige Tafelen … "
1673 G (10,000)	**1760** F (10,000)	F=French: "Tables de Sinus … "
1681 L (10,000)	**1763** G (10,000)	G=German: "Tabellen der Sinuum … "
1683 D (10,000)	**1768** G (10,000)	L=Latin: "Tabulae Sinuum … "
1689 G (10,000)	**1775** G (10,000)	
1690 F (10,000)	**1778** G (10,000)	
1695 G (10,000)	**1784** L (10,000)	
	1790 L (10,000)	

Cooperation between Vlacq and de Decker

Adriaan Vlacq	Ezechiel de Decker
1600 born in Gouda	
	1603 born in Leiden
	1621 moves to Gouda as surveyor & teacher
1624 reads Briggs' "Arithm. Log." and starts planning a completer version	
1625, 24/12: obtains copyright for plan	
1625, 17/12: signs partnership contract with D.	
	1626, 4/9: publishes "Nieuwe telkonst part I", and appitiser for part II with the already existing logarithms of the numbers 1 to 10000 and trigs
1626, 31/12: summons D. to calculate part II	
	1627, 2/10: publishes "Nieuwe telkonst part II" "Het Groote Werk": 10 x 100,000 (Rediscovered by Haaften in 1920)
1628 publishes French and Latin versions of "Arithm. Log. Part II, extended" (Copper plates for tables used from D.)	
	1631 moves to Rotterdam, maritime work
1632 opens bookshop in London	
1636 prints first "own" version of 1628 Tables	
1642 opens bookshop in Paris	
	1647 dies in Rotterdam
1648 opens bookshop in The Hague	
1667 dies in The Hague	

Some other thoughts and questions on log tables

- Hundreds of errors have been reported in the Vlacq tables, presumably in the last digit(s), but largely corrected in newer editions
- Ranges (1-100,000) are better expressed in digit precision (e.g. 4 digits in, by 7 out), which should be "balanced" to each other (Briggs was too precise with 14 digits out)

- Were John Napier's log-tables really practical? With logarithms of sines, the calculation types are very limited: only sin(a) : sin(b) = sin(c) : sin(x), as used in spherical trigonometry
- Who calculated Vlacq's Trig tables? Or was it copied from Edmund Gunter's "Canon Triangularum"? Did Gunter compute these himself?
- Gunter introduced a log-sine with values between 0 and 9.xxxxxxx, based on his assumption of an extremely large angle radius.
  Why did log-sin tables keep this caracter convention deep into the 20th century, long after the sine had been redefined to a radius of unity, resulting actually in a negative log-sine value?

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Gelezen…   **Chris Hakkaart**

Weten wij wel zeker wie de grondlegger van de logaritme is ?

In het blad 'De Ingenieur' van oktober 2004 viel mijn oog op de kop: '*Paul Wittich uitvinder Logaritmen*'. Maar heb ik niet beter geleerd dan dat John Napier die eer te beurt zou vallen?
Het artikel is gebaseerd op het boek '*Het boek dat niemand las*' van Gingerich [1], dat weer steunt op het werk: '*De Revolutionibus*' van Copernicus. Hoewel je met zo'n verwijzing niet echt wijzer wordt, stijgt wel je interesse.
In de recensie wordt gemeld dat het een verrassend leuk boek is dat onderwerpen behandeld als: de boekdrukkunst in de late middeleeuwen, diefstal van oude boeken, de rol van de astrologie, het beleid van de bibliotheken en de boekenwurmen. Ook het 'onzichtbare college'; een netwerk uit de zestiende eeuw, dat zich bezig hield met het kopiëren van aantekeningen van het ene naar het andere boek. Hierbij stuitte de auteur op Paul Wittich, een astronoom, die nooit tot publicatie kwam en die de grondlegger van de logaritme zou zijn. Napier publiceerde wel, waardoor de Wittich wellicht ten onrechte is vergeten.
Toen ik dit las, gaf het mij deels een bevestiging van mijn mening (waar velen het niet mee eens zijn) over Leonardo da Vinci, namelijk, dat die in mijn ogen meer een journalist was dan een uitvinder. Hij heeft, denk ik, (volgens de literatuur) te veel uitgevonden. Da Vinci zou wel eens een tegenpool (als journalist) kunnen zijn van Paul Wittich (geen publicaties) waardoor de eerste wel, en de tweede niet beroemd geworden is.

Wie schrijft er in de volgende MIR (na het bestuderen van het boek) over de zienswijze van Gingerich en of we onze mening over napier moeten wijzigen?

[1] ISBN 9026318634, 312 blz. € 21.95

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IJzebrand Schuitema   **November 2004**
proposal: List of 'Objects of World Heritage'

The Slide Rule - Object of World Heritage

With this letter I want to ask your attention for an idea which holds me for already long time.
All of us collectors will agree that the slide rule has occupied an important place in society during more than three centuries. This function in all imaginable professions is, to my opinion, a valid reason to put the slide rule on the international list of 'Objects of World Heritage'.

But, how to reach this goal? My proposal is as follows:
Let us try, personally or as representative of a national collector's organization, to find the way in our own country to the officials who prepare procedures to make a decision as formulated above. Taking a year for these activities, we can report on our results during IM-2005 in England and decide how we, as an international group, can make proposals to the official institute which is responsible for that 'World Heritage List'.
I hope activities as proposed will start in European countries and in the USA. I talked with some friends during IM-2004 in Bad Driburg, and all of them had positive reactions.

Let me know how you think about this idea.
Success.