

Figure 1.4: Edmund Gunter positioned numbers along a piece of wood according to their logarithms. The Gunter scale was used by seamen to simplify computations for navigation.

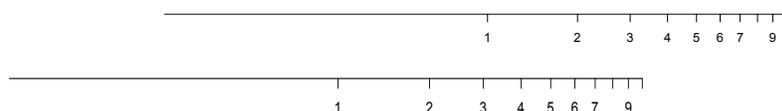


Figure 1.5: About 1625, William Oughtred put together two Gunter scales, allowing one to slide next to the other to create the slide rule.

His idea was to create a scale on wood in which numbers were marked according to their logarithms. See Figure 1.4

About 1625, William Oughtred (1575-1660) put together two Gunter scales so that one could slide next to the other, creating the slide rule. Slide rules were one of the staples of computation until the introduction of handheld calculators in the 1970s.

To end the section, let us try to characterize the slide rule from the symbols-algorithms-devices (SAD) perspective:

First, let us think of the slide rule as a device. From this perspective, it was a true revolution. Prior to slide rules, computations were done using tables, for example, tables of sines, cosines, square roots, and logarithms. The slide rule allowed one device (mathematical tables) and several manual look-ups to be replaced by another device (the slide rule) and two operations (moving one wooden rule with respect to the other) and moving a reference line along the