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Rheticus, Maurolico, and the Birth of the Secant Function.

In 1551 Georg Rheticus published a small but remarkable set of trigonometric tables introducing all at once the secant, cosecant, and cotangent functions. His approach and terminology, later partly adopted by Viete, varies substantially from the common parlance of the time. Seven years later Francesco Maurolico published his own secant table, following a different tradition established by Regiomontanus. Later in the century, within the context of the emergence of trigonometry textbooks, this led to accusations of plagiarism. We examine the content and setting of both works, including an analysis of the tables themselves that leads to a resolution of the dispute four centuries later. (Received September 12, 2015)