

The Metrological Enigma of an Inlaid Rule

Between Measuring Instrument and Decorative Object

A prestige object, c. 593-594 mm long, whose structure appears deliberate, but whose historical unit, workshop and exact measuring operation remain unresolved.

33 mm

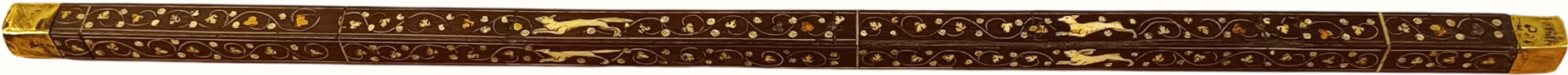
99 mm

198 mm

198 mm

66 mm

Dimensions positioned from the visible transverse separations



Observed length: c. 593-594 mm (current measurement, ±1 mm) · Reported interval values: 33, 66, 99, 198 and 198 mm

Numerical structure: 33 + 66 + 99 = 198; total ≈ 3 × 198 mm

1. What We Observe

- Quadrangular rod, c. 593-594 mm long
- Four decorated faces
- Dark wood, light engraved inlays and metal end caps
- Wood species and inlay materials remain unidentified
- No continuous numerical scale is visible
- Reported interval values: 33, 66, 99, 198 and 198 mm
- Secondary hand-incised marks probably served later practical reference; no link to the original design, unit or manufacture is established.

2. The Metrological Puzzle

33 + 66 + 99 = 198 mm

[1,2,3,6,6]/18

three equal thirds of ≈198 mm

- **Paris:** half aune ≈ 594.25 mm - best documented fit to the current total length
- **Milan:** braccio ≈ 594.936 mm - most economical arithmetical reading of the five interval values
- **Milanese system:** 12 once = 144 punti
- **Possible reading:** 8 / 16 / 24 / 48 / 48 punti
- Neither correspondence identifies the place of manufacture or use.

3. Hunting Programme and Construction

← shared orientation of all eight large animals



	Face 1	Face 2	Face 3	Face 4
Left field	fox-like	hound-like	fox-like	fox-like
Right field	hound-like	hound-like	hound-like	hare-like

- Each of the two large decorative fields shows a 3+1 distribution across the four faces.
- Transverse boundaries structure the decorative fields; the purpose of the pattern remains unknown.

4. Paired Unidentified Stamps and Brass End Construction

- Two apparently identical stamped marks, one on each brass end cap
- Their repetition links them to the terminal construction, but their purpose remains unknown
- Possible readings: control, maker/assembler, owner, inventory or later intervention
- No secure regional, religious or corporative identification
- The brass end caps may affect or define the effective measuring length



Detail shown: one of the two apparently identical stamps.

5. Closest Material Parallel



Petit Palais, Paris
ODUT1283 · c. 1535
658 × 17 × 13 mm

Museum attribution: 'Italy?'



Detail of the engraved hunting inlay (ODUT1283)

- Quadrangular ebony rule with engraved ivory hunting decoration
- Closest known material parallel; no common workshop demonstrated
- A transregional prestige-rule family is documented, but no recurrent 'hunting-rule' subtype is established
- Secondary anchors: GNM W.J.378 and Science Museum 1942-28

6. Current Working Conclusion

Strongest current interpretation

A prestige linear measuring or reference rod, although this function is not yet materially proven.

STRUCTURE Reported segmentation is coherent and potentially metrically discriminant.

LIMITS No historical unit, place of manufacture, place of use or workshop is proven.

POSITION A well-defined research problem, not a solved attribution.

7. Open Questions

? Which historical unit best explains the object?

? Was it a personal rule, a merchant's measure, a quasi-standard or a transfer rod?

? Do the metal ends define the effective measuring length?

? Can the stamped mark be identified?

? Does any additional hunting-decorated rule survive beyond ODUT1283 and SIC?

? Can a documented workshop or region be securely linked to this object?

