

1. THE QUADRATIC FORMULA

I added up the area of my two squares: 1300. The side of one exceeds the side of the other by 10.

Babylonian tablet, 2000-1600 BCE, British Museum. First known instance of a quadratic equation.

Problem 1.1. Let $x^2 + bx + c$ be a polynomial with complex coefficients and let its roots be r_1 and r_2 . Express the following quantities in terms of r_1 and r_2 . In the expressions with a square root, you may choose which square root to use.

$$b \quad c \quad b^2 - 4c \quad \sqrt{b^2 - 4c} \quad \frac{-b + \sqrt{b^2 - 4c}}{2}.$$

Problem 1.2. If we switch r_1 and r_2 , how does each of the quantities in Problem 1.1 change?