Meade LX200 Classic
How to Find Your Software Version

Clearline Technology Corp. RSF 6/2020

Some Clearline Technology products work with only one of the two communications protocols used in the LX200's lifetime as sold by Meade. The "language" that the telescope speaks to its hand controller changed after the earliest telescopes were sold, making a hand controller from an early specimen incompatible with a later telescope. In order to make sure these products work with your telescope, you will need to know which version of software your telescope is using:

- LX200 Classic Hand Controller
- LX200 Classic Hand Controller Boot Emulator

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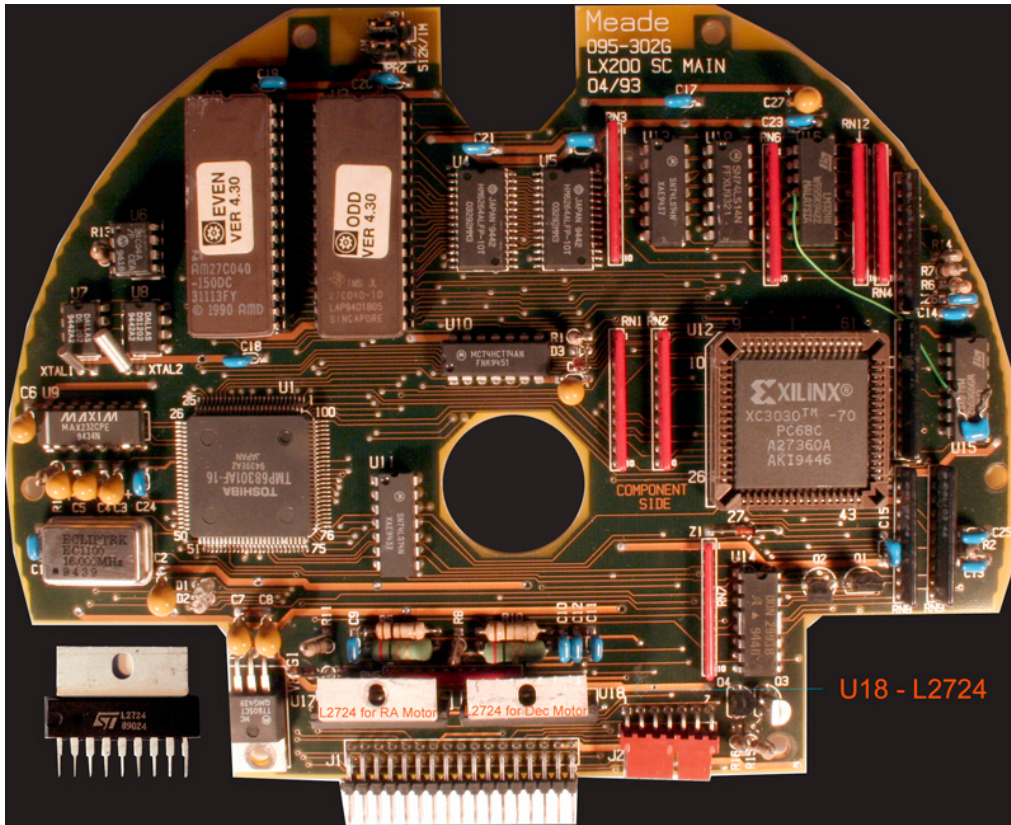

Software Versions

ROM Firmware
The software to communicate with the hand controller is integral to the system firmware, the same firmware that controls the tracking, goto, RS232 communications etc. This software is stored in two read-only memory chips on the main system CPU PC board, which is a round PC board in the base of the telescope. Here are two examples:

Example 1: Version 2.50 telescope firmware.

Example 2: Version 4.30 telescope firmware

Note the two labeled chips in each image. These labels show the software version number. The top image is of an earlier, version 2.50 system. The bottom image shows a more recent 4.30 system.

The hand controller protocol changed incompatibly at version 3.00, so basically anything starting with a 3. or higher, is the more recent protocol. Anything starting with a 2. is the earlier protocol. At the date of this writing, all Clearline Technology products work with 3.00 and above versions. (This may change in the future).

Note that you will need to remove the base plate on your telescope's mount to see this board.

Hand Controller Display
If your telescope has a working hand controller, it will report the software version on its display whenever you power up the telescope. This is a more convenient place to look. Note that there is also a version number appearing on a label on the back of the handset. This is only the version of software in the hand controller itself, and NOT to be confused with the telescope software version.

Telescope Manual
If you have the original manual that came with the telescope, you may be able to find a reference to your version number there. For example, the manual with 1996 copyright notice ("blue" manual) will refer to version 3.30 and version 4.34 on page 38, so you can infer that your telescope is at least at version 3.30,

or above. The manual that shipped with a version 2.XX telescope obviously would not mention version 3.30 since that did not exist at the time of printing.