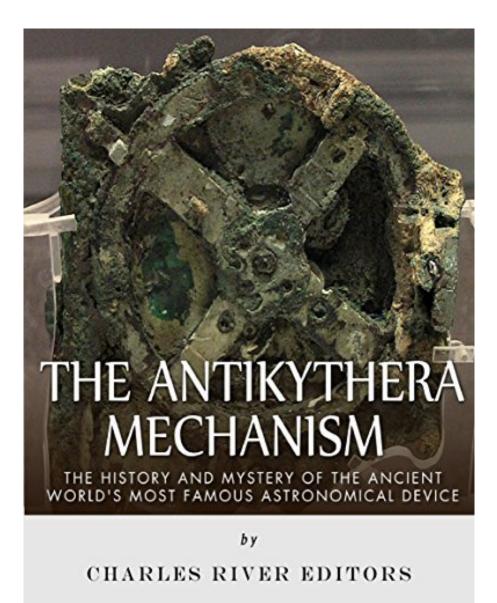


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*Chronicles the discovery and theories over the mechanism's origins and capabilities

*Includes footnotes, online resources and a bibliography for further reading.

*Includes a table of contents

"It multiplies, divides and subtracts, but you can't program it." - Michael Edmunds

Discovering ancient shipwrecks hasn't been a novelty for thousands of years, but when artifacts were salvaged from a Roman shipwreck off the Greek island of Antikythera in 1900, the discovery of one set off one of the great mysteries of antiquity.

When sponge divers investigated the shipwreck, they found the kind of items often associated with such discoveries, including marble statues, pottery, jewelry, and coins, but they also discovered a strange object, the likes of which nobody had ever seen before. Initially assumed to be pieces of rock, it turned out that the item, soon to be dubbed the Antikythera mechanism, consisted of dozens of pieces, many of which had gears. In fact, while scholars quickly deduced that it had an astronomical purpose, many believed the mechanism was too advanced to actually date back to antiquity.

As it turned out, of course, the Antikythera mechanism did date back to the 1st or 2nd century BCE, and as scholars began to more fully comprehend its abilities, fascination over the device grew. In conjunction with the determination that the mechanism was an analog computer of sorts that could predict astronomical phenomena like the positions of stars and eclipses, conjecture over the origins of the device led to theories over what the Romans were going to do with it, and whether the device was created by the Greek genius Archimedes himself. To this day, debate continues over whether there were predecessors to the model, where the astronomical observations that went into creating the model were taken, and whether the ultimate origins of the device might even be Babylonian.

The Antikythera Mechanism: The History and Mystery of the Ancient World's Most Famous Astronomical Device chronicles the discovery and study of the famous device. Along with pictures of important people, places, and events, you will learn about the Antikythera mechanism like never before, in no time at all.

- Sales Rank: #509554 in eBooks
- Published on: 2015-12-04
- Released on: 2015-12-04
- Format: Kindle eBook

Most helpful customer reviews

5 of 6 people found the following review helpful.World's First Computer. Antikythera Mechanism - Fascinating, Quick, Easy Read. Genius of Ancient Greek Mathematician(s)By Billy BobLength: Print 52 pages; Audible, not yet available as an audiobook.

This book is targeted to anyone interested in Ancient Greece or science or archaeology.

What was the Amazon Rank on the date this review was published? 1,313 among free books.

Questions that might come to mind are: Will this teach me anything new that I could not easily glean from surfing the web? The operative word is easily. Yes, the information provided in Charles River Editors book regarding the Antikythera Mechanism will help you easily understand what it is and why its find is so significant.

Is this a book that I can read without having to read others first? Yes.

Are there a lot of typos/misspellings, grammatical errors or other editing failures? There are a few, but none of them are particularly significant. One example would be in which the word 'where' was written instead of the correct word, 'were.'

Is this a fast, easy read or is it more of a leisure read? This is a fascinating, quick read. I say fascinating, because, while it took nearly 100 years to determine the purpose of this mechanism which was lost to the world some 2,000 or so years ago, the discovered function proves that ancient Greeks were stunningly brilliant and capable of unbelievable mathematics.

Reading Antikythera Mechanism you will learn of the Metonic Cycle, the Callippic Cycle and the Saros Cycle that all were trackable using this analog computer. Probably, one finds more cause for wonder with this device, this computer, than with any creation by IBM, Apple or Microsoft.

What sort of language does this writer use to amplify the points made? This is written in plain English with no hyperbole, no foul language, and no joking around, but it also is not stiff or boring or dry in any way shape or form.

My biggest pleasure or disappointment was? I was stunned to learn that something I had, years ago when I was far too naïve to understand the challenges involved by such a desire, wanted to calculate with some precision a calendar of cycles based on the time periods involved in the planets and certain star formations to any given relative point. I now know that somebody, a couple thousand years ago, worked out the equation for me, including development of a device to provide me a visual reference point.

Such a device, I hasten to add, was imagined by the great Isaac Asimov in his series of the Foundation.

The brief excerpt that follows demonstarates the style of writing in The Antikythera Mechanism.

EXCERPT

The first thing that Wright did was advance on Price's overall gear count, adding 4 gearwheels to create a total of 31, including one in Fragment C that he eventually identified as part of a Moon phase display. In a leap of logic not altogether dissimilar to Price, he created and displayed the phases of the moon by the

rotation of a half black and half silvered ball, realized by the differential rotation of the sidereal cycle of the moon and the sun's yearly cycle. He also obtained more accurate tooth counts (more in agreement with Price's original count) which facilitated a new gearing scheme, allowing him to concur at least with Price's theory that the upper back dial had been intended to display the Metonic cycle, with divisions over a five-turn scale indicating 235 lunar months (19 years, or 235 Synodic Months).

Then, measuring the dials at the back, Wright was struck by an epiphany. He realized that the main back dials were not in fact concentric circles at all, but a single spiral linking the two dials, with the upper a fiveturn spiral, and by measuring the marks on it, he was able to calculate that each revolution of the pointer represented 47 divisions, making 235 in all. From this, he determined that the upper spiral must have displayed the 235 months of the Metonic 19-year cycle, as calculated by the gear train under the front dial. He also observed that fragmentary inscriptions on the subsidiary dial suggested that the pointer showed a count of four cycles of the 19-year period, equal to the 76-year Callippic cycle.[31] In further tentative leaps of faith and logic, he added that the lower back dial counted Draconic, or lunar months, and could perhaps have been used for eclipse prediction.

All of this was singularly brilliant, and the opus of a man without much in the way of academic credentials, reinforced with enormous gumption and self-belief. Echoing some of the lapses that he attributed to Derek Price, however, when he was unable to reconcile all of the known gears into a single coherent mechanism, he advanced the theory that the mechanism had been altered, or modified in some way, with some astronomical functions removed and others added. He had, after all, used various items of second hand detritus lying around his own workshop to build the replica, so it made sense that an ancient craftsman would have done likewise to build the original. In general, however, the brilliance of his work is unassailable, with perhaps his greatest stroke of genius being the incorporation of an epicyclic pin and slot engagement gear to simulate the elliptical anomaly in the angular velocity of the moon.[

Charles River Editors (2015-12-04). The Antikythera Mechanism: The History and Mystery of the Ancient World's Most Famous Astronomical Device (Kindle Locations 490-511). Charles River Editors. Kindle Edition.

Bottom Line:

As might deduced from this review, this is one of my favorite booklets from Charles River Editors.

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