

World's Oldest 'Computer' May Be Older Than Previously Thought

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Since its discovery over a century ago, the Antikythera Mechanism has had scholars scratching their heads over how the Greeks managed to build a mechanical computer a hundred years before the birth of Christ and thousands of years before anything similar. But now things have become even stranger as researchers claim that it's over a hundred years older than previously believed and may have been built by a famous hand.



The Antikythera Mechanism is the world's oldest computer (Photo: Giovanni Dall'Orto)

The Antikythera Mechanism was discovered in 1901 by sponge divers off the Greek island of Antikythera. At first, not much was made of it, but after the coral-encrusted, corroded mass of bronze gears was later studied using x-rays, gamma rays, and neutrons, and then reconstructed, it turned out to be something astonishing.

The device at first was thought to be some sort of surprisingly early clock, but then it turned out to be the

oldest computer known. In fact it was an analog astronomical computer based on the principle of the differential calculator that uses gear trains as a way of performing complex calculations. On further study, the device proved capable of calculating, among other things, the position of the planets, [sidereal time](#), and eclipses.

And all of this by using technology that was never realized to exist in the ancient world and after it vanished, didn't reappear until the 14th century. Even today the device sparks interest as the design is adapted to not only museum exhibits, but also [watches](#).

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