

# Newsletter



**for the History of Science in Southeastern Europe**

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## Le Mécanisme d'Anticythère

Exposition présentée par l'équipe d'Histoire, Philosophie des Sciences et des Techniques  
Institut de Recherches Néohelléniques de la Fondation Nationale de la Recherche Scientifique

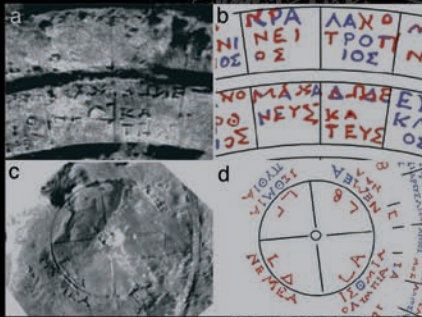


Projet Hephaestus, FP7, RegPot 1-2008, 229825

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**Hephaestus**  
Hellenic Philosophy, History and Environmental  
Science Teaching Under Scrutiny





**Les mois du calendrier métonien**  
 Les noms et la séquence des douze mois des calendriers grecs anciens varient selon les sites. Les variations de la terminologie reflètent les relations entre les régions et colonies. Le calendrier métonien du mécanisme d'Antikythera est d'origine syracusaine et s'appuie sur le développement du calendrier Syracusain en Sicile: sept des douze mois sont similaires soit à leur nom qu'à leur séquence à ceux du calendrier Syracusain qui était probablement utilisé à l'échelle de l'île.

**Le cadastre d'Apollonius**  
 Une petite agale trouvée à Fronteira de la région du cycle de Méton avec une période de quatre ans, celle de l'Apollonius. Le cadastre est divisé en douze zones partiellement: « Iphrosia » près de Corinthe des deux subdivisions: « Champs » les deux subdivisions, « Pythia » à Delphes les deux subdivisions et « Naxos » près de Naxos de la subdivision de Delos.

**Months in the Metonic calendar**  
 The names and sequence of the twelve months used in calendars in ancient Greece often vary widely between different sites. Variations and similarities likely reflect relations between the regions and colonies. The Metonic calendar of the Antikythera Mechanism of Corinthis origin and is related to the calendar of the Sicilian colony of Syracuse in Sicily: seven of its twelve months match both in name and sequence those of the Syracusan calendar, which was probably used on the island of Syracuse.

**The Olympiad**  
 A small bronze coin inscribed with the names of the twelve months, with a period of four years, the Olympiad. The coin is inscribed with the names of the twelve months: « Iphrosia » near Corinthis, the « Champs », the « Pythia » and the « Naxos ».

**Où, quand et par qui a-t-il été construit?**

On croit savoir aujourd'hui que le mécanisme a été probablement construit pendant la deuxième moitié du 2e s. av. J.-C. et fait partie de la tradition de la «Sphaeropolia» (ou sphéropélie, construction des sphères) d'Archimède, l'astronome mathématicien d'Apollonia de Pégé le 2e s. av. J.-C., suivi par Hipparque (2e s. av. J.-C.) avait à cette époque progressé suffisamment pour rendre possible la conception d'un mécanisme représentant le mouvement des «astres errants» (les planètes) et le mouvement variable de la Lune.

Jusqu'à très récemment, Poseidonios de Rhodes était considéré comme le concepteur probable du mécanisme. Poseidonios et Hipparque ont tous deux exercé l'astronomie à Rhodes, ce qui fait de cette île un endroit probable pour la construction du mécanisme. D'ailleurs, une grande partie de la cargaison de l'épave semble aussi provenir de Rhodes. Mais les noms des mois du calendrier métonien lus récemment sont à consonance corinthienne, ce qui fait penser à Corinthe ou ses colonies, par exemple Syracuse mais aussi Tauromentum (l'actuelle Taormina) qui était sous l'influence de cette dernière. Serait-il possible que le mécanisme fasse partie de la tradition d'Archimède (2e s. av. J.-C.) en intégrant dans la sphaeropolia la construction des épicycles et des équants qui ont permis de rendre compte du mouvement apparent des corps célestes?

**Where, when and by who was it built?**

It is thought that the Mechanism was probably built during the second half of the 2nd century BCE as part of the tradition of "sphaeropolia" (sphere making), possibly originated by Archimedes. Starting with Apollonius of Perga (3rd - 2nd Century BCE), Hipparchos of Nicaea (2nd Century BCE) and their contemporaries, astronomical theory had progressed far enough to make it possible to design a mechanism representing the movement of the "wander stars" (the planets) and the variable motion of the Moon (the first anomaly).

Poseidonios from Rhodes had been considered as a possible designer of the Mechanism. Both Hipparchos and Poseidonios were active in Rhodes and this pointed to Rhodes or to the nearby Ionian coasts as a possible place for the birth of the Mechanism. Much of the cargo of the Antikythera ship also points to the same region. But the Metonic calendar and the month names point to months that could originate from Corinth itself or one of its colonies like Tauromenion, founded by Syracusians. Could a tradition originating with Archimedes have survived, integrating into sphere making the epicycles or the equants, which permitted the explanation of the variation of the apparent velocity of heavenly bodies?

**ASTRONOMES ANCIENS  
 ANCIENT ASTRONOMERS**

Méton 5<sup>e</sup> s. av. J.C. Meto

Eudoxe 408-355 Eudoxus

Héraclide 385-315 Herakleides

Callippe 370-310 Callippos

Archimède 287-212 Archimedes

Aratus 276? Aratus

Apollonius 262-190 Apollonius

Hipparque 190-120 Hipparchus

Poseidonios 135-51 Poseidonios

Cicéron 1<sup>er</sup> s. av. J.C. Cicero

**NAUFRAGE D'ANTICYTHÈRE 85-60 ANTIKYTHERA WRECK**

Geminus 1<sup>er</sup> s. av. J.C. Geminus

Manilius 1<sup>er</sup> s. av. J.C. Manilius

Ptolémée 85-165 Ptolemy

## Pourquoi le mécanisme d'Anticythère serait-il une machine à calculer astronomique?

Quand les fragments du mécanisme ont été découverts, il a été observé qu'ils portaient des inscriptions sur lesquelles on pouvait lire des termes astronomiques comme "Soleil", "rayon", "Vénus" etc.

Après le nettoyage des fragments de nouvelles inscriptions furent révélées, comme par exemple des nombres liés à des périodes astronomiques: le nombre  $\Theta$  (Iota-Théta) = 19 pour le cycle lunaire de Méton et le nombre  $\Sigma\text{K}\Gamma$  (Sigma Kappa Gamma) = 223 pour le cycle de prédiction des éclipses appelé Saros. Il était évident qu'il s'agissait d'un instrument astronomique sophistiqué.

## Why the Mechanism is an astronomical calculating machine?

From the moment when the fragments of the Mechanism were discovered, it was observed that its mechanical elements were mixed with bits of inscriptions where astronomical terms like "of the Sun", "ray", "Venus" were visible. The similarity of these mechanical elements with more recent objects was obvious.

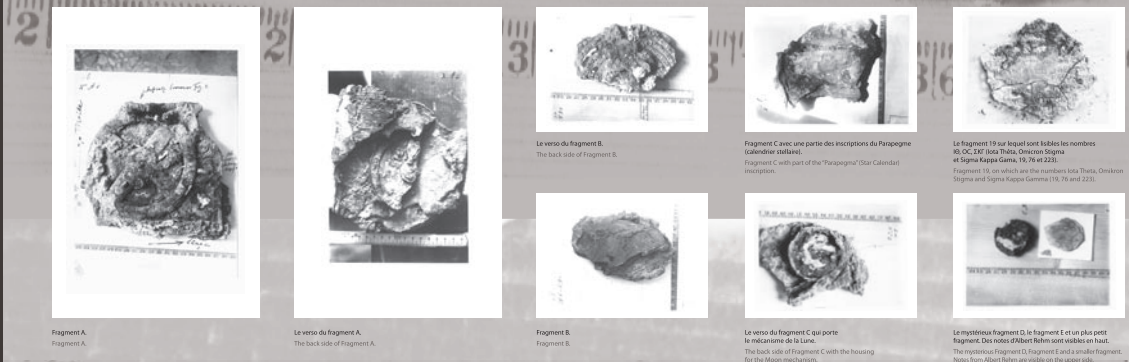
As cleaning of the fragments moved forward, new inscriptions were revealed, such as numbers related to astronomical periods (e.g. the number Iota Theta - 19 for the Metonic period of the Moon and the number Sigma Kappa Gamma - 223 for the Saros eclipse prediction period). It was clearly an astronomical device of great sophistication.

Photos des archives d'Albert Rehm datant de 1965, montrant des fragments du mécanisme avant le traitement de conservation et à côté des inscriptions respectives. Ces photos sont précieuses pour la reconstitution du puzzle des inscriptions.

Photos from 1965 from Albert Rehm's archive, showing fragments of the Mechanism before the conservation treatment that followed, revealing more inscriptions. These photos are an invaluable asset for reconstructing the "paper puzzle" of the inscriptions.



ÉCHELLE 1:1 / SCALE 1:1



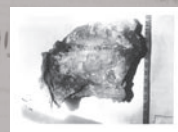
Fragment A.  
Fragment A.



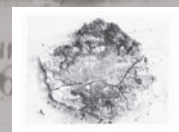
Le verso du fragment A.  
The back side of Fragment A.



Le verso du fragment B.  
The back side of Fragment B.



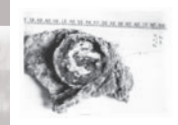
Fragment C avec une partie des inscriptions du Parapegma (Star Calendar).



Le fragment 19 sur lequel sont visibles les nombres  $\Theta$ ,  $\Sigma\text{K}\Gamma$  (Iota Théta, Omicron Sigma et Sigma Kappa Gamma, 19, 76 et 223).



Fragment B.  
Fragment B.



Le verso du fragment C qui porte le mécanisme de la Lune.  
The back side of Fragment C with the housing for the Moon mechanism.



Le mystérieux Fragment D, le fragment E et un plus petit fragment. Des traces d'Albert Rehm sont visibles en haut.




# Qui a étudié le mécanisme d'Anticythère et pourquoi de nouvelles recherches étaient nécessaires?

En mai 1902, dans la première publication au sujet des découvertes du naufrage d'Anticythère, l'« étrange machine en bronze » est déjà mentionnée et un usage astronomique lui est attribué. Dans des publications ultérieures, certains pensaient à un astrolabe tandis que d'autres imaginaient des fonctions plus complexes, comme celles d'un planétarium. Le débat continua jusqu'aux années 1970 quand le mécanisme fut soumis aux rayons X. Alors, les chercheurs arrivèrent à un consensus : il s'agissait bien d'une machine à calculer qui comporte des calendriers et est reliée à des phénomènes astronomiques. Mais ses fonctions n'étaient pas encore déterminées avec certitude et les inscriptions déchiffrées étaient éparses. C'est pourquoi le Musée National Archéologique donna deux nouvelles permissions pour que les fragments soient examinés à l'aide de techniques de pointe : en 1990 par tomographie linéaire et en 2005 par scanner X 3D et imagerie de surface sophistiquée. L'étude de données de cette dernière recherche par une équipe pluridisciplinaire est toujours en cours.

## Who studied the Mechanism and why new investigations were needed?


From May 1902, in the first publication about the discoveries from the Antikythera wreck, the 'strange bronze machine' is mentioned, with a possible astronomical function. In subsequent publications, the word 'astrolabe' is mentioned, while other opinions prefer a more complex device, like a planetarium. The debate continues until the 1970s and the first X-rays, where consensus is reached about the nature of the artefact: it is a mechanical calculating device which displays calendars and related astronomical phenomena. But theories about its functions are challenged and the deciphered inscriptions are sparse. Consequently, the National Archaeological Museum grants permissions for further investigations: In 1990, with linear tomography, and in 2005, with advanced surface imaging and tomography techniques. This last interdisciplinary research is still ongoing.

LE MÉCANISME D'ANTICYTHÈRE




**Le carnet de notes d'Albert Heberlein** ou, pour la première fois, le mot "Antikythera" pour mentionner le privilège de voir d'être étudié systématiquement les inscriptions de la partie visible du mécanisme. Heberlein a aussi un modèle qu'il ne lui a jamais construit.

**Albert Heberlein** notebook address for the very first time the word "Antikythera" in connection. Gernsmeier published Albert Heberlein was the first to have thought of studied the inscriptions and the visible mechanical parts of the Mechanism. He had also made a model which he never built.



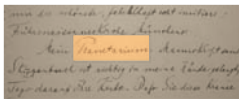
**Lamiral Thiofanidis** (1911-1970) fut le premier à construire un modèle du mécanisme... contribua à leur combatte le mécanisme à l'étranger en demandant des copies et en correspondant avec des spécialistes. Il pensait qu'il s'agissait d'un instrument de navigation géométrique et il fut le premier à mentionner le nom de l'astronome Hippocrate dans la recherche du constructeur.

**Admiral Thiofanidis** was the first to build a model of the Mechanism, and he kept on spreading the knowledge about it through his article Gernsmeier, with letters and correspondence with specialists. He was thinking of the device as a navigational instrument (geographical) and he was the first to involve the name of Hipparchos in its design.



L'historien anglais des sciences **Derek de Solla Price** (1922-1983) fut le premier qui fut capable de lire les inscriptions du fragment 99A et aux radiographies faites par le physicien grec Charalambos Karakalos. En 1971, grâce à un article pour Peter Dinkley, Scientific American et en 1974, lire de donner le classique Gernsmeier from the Greeks. Il proposa un nouveau modèle selon lequel le mécanisme était une machine à calculer à fonctions calculables.

**Derek de Solla Price** was a historian of science and the first to see the internal structure of the fragments, thanks to the radiographs made by Charalambos Karakalos. He initially published an important article in Scientific American in 1955 and, in 1974, in his new classical Gernsmeier from the Greeks. He proposed a new model of the Mechanism as a universal mechanical computer.




Le modèle en carton de Derek de Solla Price utilisé pour ses conférences et exposés au sujet du mécanisme.  
Derek Price made a cardboard model used in his lecture presentations about the Mechanism.



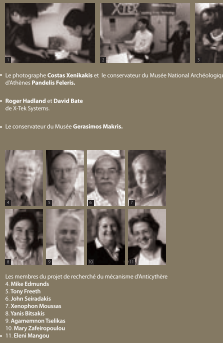
**Alan Bromley** (1947-2003), professeur des sciences du calcul à l'université de Sydney, était un spécialiste de l'histoire des machines à calculer à l'aide de la tomographie linéaire. En collaboration avec Michael Wright et Eleni Mangou, Bromley et l'archéologue Frank Periniel construisirent une reconstruction du mécanisme d'Anticythère qui fut exposée pendant l'année de l'astronomie en 2009 au Nicholson Museum de l'université de Sydney.

**Alan Bromley** professor at the University of Sydney was a computer scientist and historian with a particular interest in mechanical computing. He worked at the National Archaeological Museum, with Michael Wright and Eleni Mangou, data from the Antikythera Mechanism using the technique of linear tomography. Bromley, together with clockmaker Frank Periniel, built a reconstruction of the Antikythera mechanism, displayed for the Year of Astronomy 2009 at the Nicholson Museum of the University of Sydney.



**Michael Wright**, conservateur d'ingénierie mécanique au London Science Museum et à l'Imperial College de Londres, construisit un nouveau modèle du mécanisme qui présentait en 2002. Ce modèle incorpore les nouvelles recherches et admettait que les idées de Heberlein et de Price, selon lesquelles le mécanisme servait de composant en géométrie, étaient extrêmement réalisables. Michael Wright entreprit aussi des recherches sur les outils et les matériaux utilisés pour la construction du mécanisme.

**Michael Wright** built an alternative model of the Mechanism that was presented in 2002. This incorporated several advances and showed that the ideas of Heberlein and Price that it might have included a planetarium were mechanically possible. He also focused his research on the tools and materials used in Ancient Greece.



Le photographe **Costas Kerkiras** et le conservateur du Musée National Archéologique d'Athènes **Pandelis Fakiolas**.

**Roger Haafstad** et **David Rate** de X-Ray Systems.

Le conservateur du Musée **Genastios Matis**.

Les membres du projet de recherche du mécanisme d'Anticythère :

1. Alan Bromley
2. Tony Heath
3. Eleni Mangou
4. John Sideridis
5. Konstantinos Moutakas
6. Tom Dinkley
7. Agapiemission Tsakalou
8. Maria Zafeiropoulou
9. Eleni Mangou
10. Bill Ambler, Tom Malsbenden & Dan Galt
11. X-Ray Systems' Pendergast (Tom Heath)

Le fondateur de X-Ray Systems, **Roger Haafstad**.



Vue de l'atelier de Michael Wright. On peut voir dans le coin en haut à gauche un des nouveaux modèles, certains d'entre eux.

Photographe **Costas Kerkiras** & **Genastios Matis** (Musée National Archéologique d'Athènes)  
**Roger Heath** (anciennement **David Rate**) de **X-Ray Systems**  
**Michael Genastios Matis** (Musée National Archéologique d'Athènes)  
**Members of the Antikythera Mechanism Research Project:**  
 1. Alan Bromley  
 2. Tony Heath  
 3. Eleni Mangou  
 4. John Sideridis  
 5. Konstantinos Moutakas  
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 10. **Bill Ambler**, **Tom Malsbenden** & **Dan Galt**  
 11. **X-Ray Systems' Pendergast** (Tom Heath)

### Quelles sont les parties du mécanisme d'Anticythère et que montre-t-il?

La partie historique du mécanisme d'Anticythère est faite d'inscriptions, de publications d'ouvrages et d'objets. Le mécanisme complexe avec des inscriptions gravées sur les parties de son intérieur et extérieur sur deux pages de son disque servant à former. Ces inscriptions ont été copiées dans un livre, chez des voyageurs, par les premiers épigraphistes qui les ont trouvées.

L'étude de ces inscriptions dans le contexte de l'astronomie grecque antique et leur contenu en relation avec les parties mécaniques a permis aux chercheurs d'affirmer les fonctions astronomiques et calendaires de l'objet.

Malheureusement, ces pièces du mécanisme ont subi de très importantes détériorations expérimentales et ont été gravées par erreur sur l'interprétation des inscriptions.

### Which are the parts of the Mechanism and what is displayed on it?

The Mechanism consists of scales, dials, wheels, gears and pinion systems on many of its plates, including the front and back covers. In particular, the early 20th century epigraphists, these inscriptions are something like an "instruction manual".

During those inscriptions, the functions of almost all components in conjunction with identification of the surviving mechanical parts (gears, scales, dials) is possible according to the evidence about the calendar and astronomical functions of the surviving device.

But an important part of the Mechanism is missing and the research on some functions refers to a large degree on the interpretation of the inscriptions.

**Historical Background**  
The mechanism was discovered in 1880 on the island of Antikythera, Greece. It is a complex of ancient Greek technology, consisting of a series of interlocking gears and dials, which were used to calculate astronomical events such as the positions of the sun, moon and planets.

**The Mechanism's Function**  
The mechanism is believed to have been used for astronomical calculations, including the prediction of eclipses and the determination of the positions of the sun, moon and planets. It is considered to be the first analog computer.

**The Mechanism's Construction**  
The mechanism is made of bronze and consists of approximately 30 gears of various sizes, some of which are interconnected. It also features several dials and scales, which are used to display the results of the calculations.

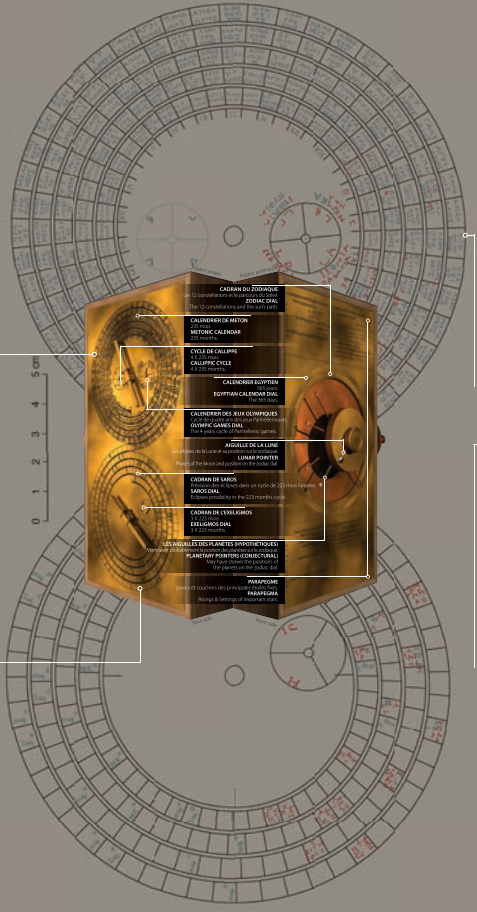
**The Mechanism's Discovery**  
The mechanism was discovered by a group of divers in 1880, while exploring the wreck of an ancient Greek ship. The discovery was a major archaeological find, as it provided the first glimpse into the advanced technology of ancient Greece.

**The Mechanism's Significance**  
The mechanism is a remarkable achievement of ancient Greek technology, demonstrating a level of complexity and precision that was unmatched at the time. It is a testament to the ingenuity and scientific knowledge of the ancient Greeks.

**The Mechanism's Legacy**  
The mechanism has inspired modern scientists and engineers, and has led to the development of new technologies such as analog computers and mechanical calculators. It is a symbol of human ingenuity and the pursuit of knowledge.



### Plan des inscriptions et des fonctions Map of inscriptions and functions



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**CALAN DU DIONISIE**  
The Dionysian Calendar is a 12-month calendar that was used in ancient Greece. It is based on the cycle of the sun and moon, and is used to determine the dates of religious festivals and other events.

**CALAN DE METON**  
The Metonic Calendar is a 19-year calendar that was used in ancient Greece. It is based on the cycle of the sun and moon, and is used to determine the dates of religious festivals and other events.

**CALENDRIER EGYPTEEN**  
The Egyptian Calendar is a 12-month calendar that was used in ancient Egypt. It is based on the cycle of the sun and moon, and is used to determine the dates of religious festivals and other events.

**CALENDRIER DES HELLANISMOLES**  
The Hellenistic Calendar is a 12-month calendar that was used in ancient Greece. It is based on the cycle of the sun and moon, and is used to determine the dates of religious festivals and other events.

**CALENDRIER DES ROMAINS**  
The Roman Calendar is a 12-month calendar that was used in ancient Rome. It is based on the cycle of the sun and moon, and is used to determine the dates of religious festivals and other events.

**CALENDRIER DES GREGOIS**  
The Gregorian Calendar is a 12-month calendar that is used in most parts of the world today. It is based on the cycle of the sun and moon, and is used to determine the dates of religious festivals and other events.

**CALENDRIER DES ISRAELIENS**  
The Hebrew Calendar is a 12-month calendar that is used in Israel and other parts of the world. It is based on the cycle of the sun and moon, and is used to determine the dates of religious festivals and other events.

**CALENDRIER DES CHINOIS**  
The Chinese Calendar is a 12-month calendar that is used in China and other parts of the world. It is based on the cycle of the sun and moon, and is used to determine the dates of religious festivals and other events.

**CALENDRIER DES JAPONAIS**  
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**CALENDRIER DES MALAYSIENS**  
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**CALENDRIER DES PHILIPPINIENS**  
The Philippine Calendar is a 12-month calendar that is used in the Philippines and other parts of the world. It is based on the cycle of the sun and moon, and is used to determine the dates of religious festivals and other events.

**CALENDRIER DES VIETNAMIENS**  
The Vietnamese Calendar is a 12-month calendar that is used in Vietnam and other parts of the world. It is based on the cycle of the sun and moon, and is used to determine the dates of religious festivals and other events.

**CALENDRIER DES THAI**  
The Thai Calendar is a 12-month calendar that is used in Thailand and other parts of the world. It is based on the cycle of the sun and moon, and is used to determine the dates of religious festivals and other events.

**CALENDRIER DES BURMEAIS**  
The Burmese Calendar is a 12-month calendar that is used in Myanmar and other parts of the world. It is based on the cycle of the sun and moon, and is used to determine the dates of religious festivals and other events.

**CALENDRIER DES LAOTIENS**  
The Lao Calendar is a 12-month calendar that is used in Laos and other parts of the world. It is based on the cycle of the sun and moon, and is used to determine the dates of religious festivals and other events.

**CALENDRIER DES CAMBODGIENS**  
The Cambodian Calendar is a 12-month calendar that is used in Cambodia and other parts of the world. It is based on the cycle of the sun and moon, and is used to determine the dates of religious festivals and other events.

**CALENDRIER DES VIETNAMIENS DU SUD**  
The Southern Vietnamese Calendar is a 12-month calendar that is used in southern Vietnam and other parts of the world. It is based on the cycle of the sun and moon, and is used to determine the dates of religious festivals and other events.

**CALENDRIER DES LAOSIENS DU SUD**  
The Southern Lao Calendar is a 12-month calendar that is used in southern Laos and other parts of the world. It is based on the cycle of the sun and moon, and is used to determine the dates of religious festivals and other events.

**CALENDRIER DES CAMBODGIENS DU SUD**  
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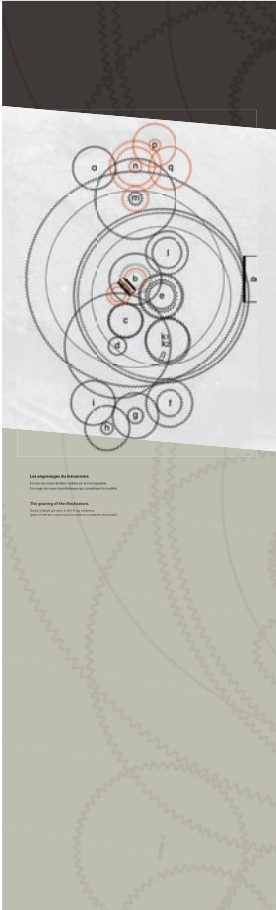


**Engagement et jeu des dents de roue**

Le contact entre les dents de deux roues dentées est régi par la loi de l'engagement. Cette loi stipule que le point de contact entre deux dents doit appartenir à une droite fixe, la droite de l'engagement, qui est tangente aux cercles de base des deux roues. Cette condition assure que le rapport de transmission reste constant tout au long de l'engagement.

**Les lois de l'engagement**

Les lois de l'engagement sont les conditions géométriques qui permettent à deux roues dentées de transmettre le mouvement sans à-coups. Elles sont basées sur le principe de l'engagement par un point fixe, qui est la tangente aux cercles de base des deux roues.



**Les engagements de la roue**

Le diagramme illustre les différents points de contact et les trajectoires des dents d'une roue dentée. Les lettres indiquent des positions spécifiques sur le cercle de base et le cercle addendaire, permettant d'analyser le mouvement relatif des dents.

**The gears of the mechanism**

The diagram shows the engagement points and paths of the teeth of a gear. The letters mark specific positions on the base circle and the addendum circle, used to analyze the relative motion of the teeth.

**06**

**Comment ça fonctionne?**

En regardant une roue dentée, on se rend compte que les dents ne sont pas des cercles parfaits. Elles ont une forme qui leur permet d'engrainer sans à-coups. Cette forme est le résultat d'un processus de fabrication précis, qui assure que le rapport de transmission reste constant tout au long de l'engagement.

Le principe de l'engagement est basé sur la tangente aux cercles de base des deux roues. Cette tangente est la droite de l'engagement, qui assure que le rapport de transmission reste constant.

**How does it work?**

Looking at a gear, one realizes that the teeth are not perfect circles. They have a shape that allows them to mesh smoothly. This shape is the result of a precise manufacturing process, which ensures that the gear ratio remains constant throughout the engagement.

The principle of engagement is based on the tangent to the base circles of the two gears. This tangent is the line of engagement, which ensures that the gear ratio remains constant.



**Formes d'engrènement de deux de roues**

Cette image illustre la forme des dents de deux roues dentées en engrenement. On peut voir comment les profils des dents s'engrènent l'un avec l'autre, respectant la loi de l'engagement.

**Shapes of gears and their mesh**

This image illustrates the shape of the teeth of two meshing gears. One can see how the profiles of the teeth engage with each other, following the law of engagement.



**Le mouvement de la Lune et la production des signes**

Cette image illustre le mouvement de la Lune et la production des signes. On peut voir comment les différents éléments du mécanisme interagissent pour générer les signes du zodiaque.

**The Moon's motion and the signs production**

This image illustrates the Moon's motion and the production of signs. One can see how the different elements of the mechanism interact to generate the zodiac signs.

## Est-il unique (sans ancêtres ou successeurs?)

Tandis que plusieurs textes anciens mentionnent des mécanismes similaires, aucune de ces mentions ne concorde exactement avec ce que nous connaissons du mécanisme d'Antikythère. Il est probable que des mécanismes similaires aient été construits pendant l'Antiquité, mais ils ne survécurent pas à cause du recyclage de leurs matériaux.

La technique de découpage des roues dentées et leur usage pour faire varier les rapports de rotation étaient connus au moins un siècle avant la construction estimée du mécanisme (seconde moitié du 2e s. av. J.-C.). Plus tard, Cicéron (fin 2e s. – début 1er s. av. J.-C.) Vitruve (1er s. av. J.-C.) et Héron d'Alexandrie (1er s. av. J.-C. – 1er s. après J.-C.), donnent des détails sur des instruments à engrenages, mais aussi sur des planétariums. Il faut noter que la terminologie de Héron concorde avec certains termes du « manuel d'emploi » du mécanisme d'Antikythère.

Après le mécanisme d'Antikythère, le prochain instrument astronomique connu qui comporte des engrenages compliqués est l'horloge de Giovanni Dondi (l'« astrarium »). Après la Renaissance en Europe occidentale, des planétariums de plus en plus précis furent construits à l'usage des astronomes mais aussi comme objets de prestige. Malgré le manque d'informations, on peut supposer que les techniques de construction aient été perpétuées par des artisans anonymes, comme d'ailleurs dans d'autres cas similaires.

## Is it unique (without precursors or successors?)

References to similar mechanisms are found in many ancient texts, but no one matches exactly our knowledge of this specific device. It is probable that similar mechanisms were constructed in Antiquity, but there were not saved as they were recycled to build other objects.

The technology for cutting gears and their use for the variation of rotation ratios were known at least a century before the estimated period during which the Mechanism was built, e.g. the second half of the 2nd century BCE. After the Mechanism was built, Cicero (end of 2nd century BCE – beginning 1st century BCE), Vitruvius (1st century BCE) and Heron (1st century BCE – 1st century AD) have detailed mentions of geared devices, but also of planetaria. It should be mentioned that Heron's terminology matches pretty closely some of the terms encountered in the 'user manual' of the Mechanism.

After the Antikythera Mechanism, the next known complex geared astronomical device is the Giovanni di Dondi's planetarium (astrarium). Later in Western Europe more and more precise planetaria were built, used by astronomers but also providing their owners with glamour. Despite the lack of evidence, it is considered that this tradition was saved by anonymous artisans, as seen in similar cases.



L'astrarium de Dondi

Environ en 1380, le Padouan Giovanni Dondi termina la construction d'un planétarium astronomique avec mécanisme horloger qui reproduit les mouvements des planètes et des étoiles fixes. L'astrarium était le joyau de la bibliothèque d'un riche marchand florentin et ce pour être d'un siècle il était considéré comme une grande prouesse technique.

De Dondi's Astrarium

In about 1380, Giovanni Dondi from Padova completed a planetarium instrument with an horological mechanism which displays the movements of the planets and of the fixed stars. The astrarium was a jewel in the house of Gian Galeazzo Visconti, Duke of Milan, and for more than a century, it was considered as a major technological achievement.

L'orrery de John Rowley

Ce planétarium fut construit vers 1712-1713 par John Rowley pour le seigneur Charles Boyle, « Earl of Orrery ». Les orreries succèdent à tradition des planétariums héliocentriques du 16e siècle et se devaient très populaires après la publication de Newton's Principia in 1687.

John Rowley's Orrery

This planetarium was built around 1712-1713 by John Rowley for the renowned scientist Charles Boyle, « Earl of Orrery ». From these planetaria of this type are known as orreries. They gained fame in England in 17th century following Newton's planetaria, that became very popular after the publication of Newton's Principia in 1687.

L'odômetre de Héron

Cet appareil consiste à un agencement des roues dentées et de vis sans fin qui transmettent le mouvement des roues d'un char et le transforment en unités de mesure de la distance. Les bords des roues se trouvent la partie supérieure de l'odômetre engrenent en unités de longueur la distance parcourue. Ce modèle a été construit par Georges Franck suivant la description de Héron.

Heron's Hodometer (from SMAT's Collection of Models)

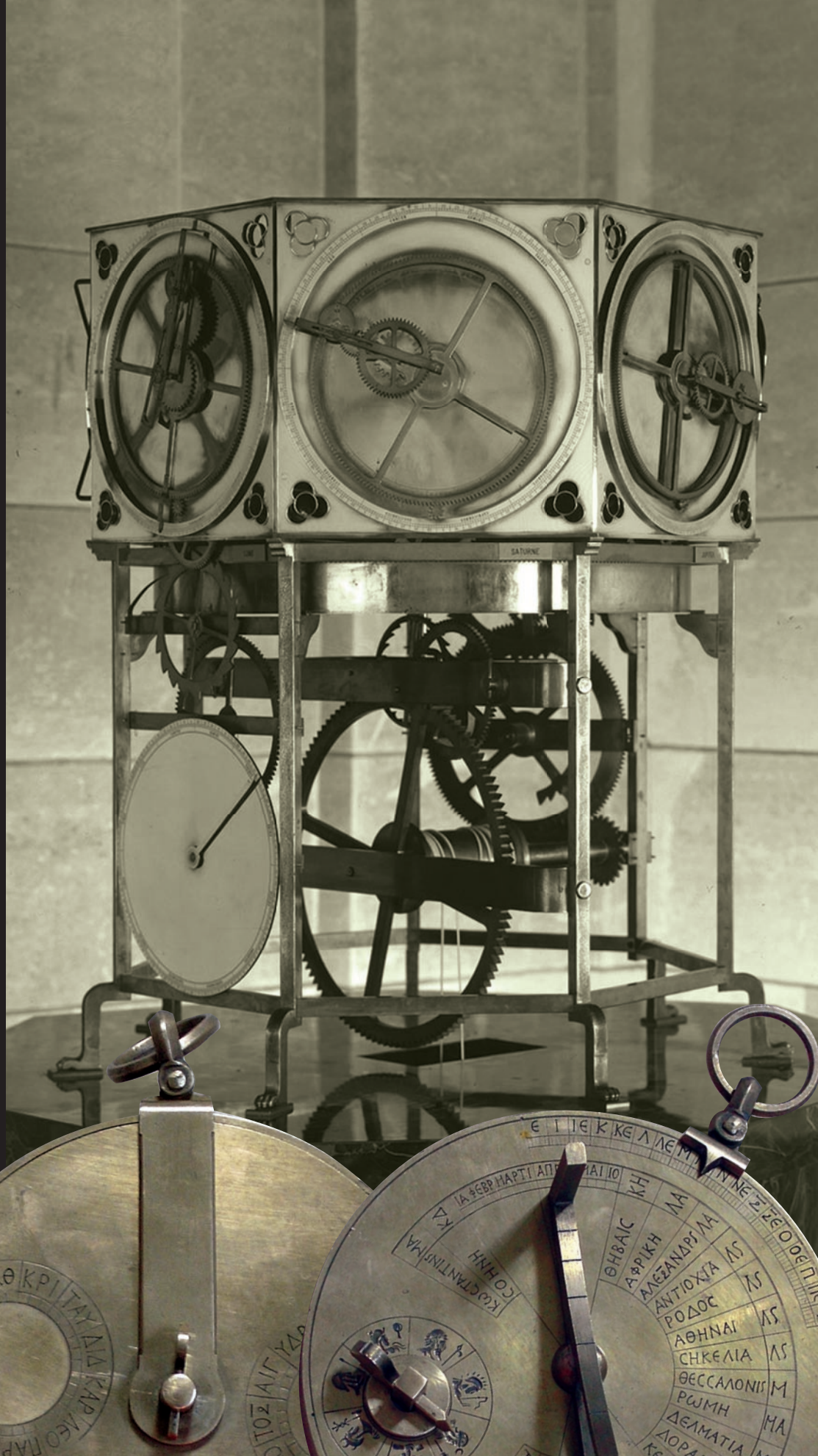
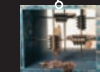
The device consists of a set of toothed wheels which, meshed with worm gears, transmit the movement of a chariot wheel and convert it into units of length. The three discs on top of the homometer wheel find the distance covered in units of length. With the chariot's axle, the homometer can be considered as a odometer which can be fitted to a large vehicle. The design and construction by Georges Franck was inspired by the description given by Heron.

Cadran solaire byzantin

Modèle construit par Michael Wright. Originaux est exposé au Science Museum de Londres.

Byzantine Sundial

This model was built by Michael Wright. The original is kept at the Science Museum in London.



### Qu'est-ce que "calculatrice astronomique et calendaire"?

Le calcul de la position des corps célestes a toujours tenu une place importante dans l'organisation de la vie sociale. Aujourd'hui nous avons recours aux ordinateurs et à des logiciels spéciaux pour déterminer, en fonction d'une date et d'un endroit précis, la position et la phase de la Lune ou la position des planètes, des étoiles fixes et des constellations, mais aussi pour calculer les éclipses et faire les conversions entre les calendriers employés par diverses civilisations.

Certains de ces calculs peuvent être accomplis à l'aide de calculatrices mécaniques faites d'engrenages, d'axes et d'aiguilles, avec, toutefois, une moindre précision.

De tels instruments sont les astrolabes (pour calculer l'heure et le lever et le coucher des étoiles), les horloges astronomiques plus ou moins complexes (lesquelles, en sus de l'heure, donnent des mesures pour divers phénomènes astronomiques), les planétaires, les planetariums, etc.

### What is an "astronomical and calendrical computer"?

Predicting the position of heavenly bodies was for all time important for human social life. A modern computer can output, for a given date and location, the position and the phases of the Moon, the visible constellations, the eclipses... But also complex conversions between various calendars used from the Antiquity.

Some of these calculations can be performed by mechanical means (gears, axes and pointers), although without the same precision or speed.

Such examples are the astrolabes (for calculating the hour, the sunrise and sunset of stars), the complex astronomical clocks (which, along with the hour, display some astronomical phenomena), orreries, planetaria, etc.

**L'horloge astronomique de Prague**  
Elle fut construite vers 1410 mais complétée plus tard. Il s'agit d'un calendrier mécanique horloger qui montre la position du Soleil et de la Lune sur le zodiaque ainsi que les phases lunaires.

**The Prague astronomical clock**  
Constructed around 1410 and completed later. It is a calendar with horological mechanisms displaying the position of the Sun on the Zodiac as well as the position and the phases of the Moon.

