The Inscriptions of the Antikythera Mechanism by Martin Allen, W. Ambrisco, Magdalini Anastatsiou, D. Bate, Yanis Bitsakis, A. Crawley, Mike Edmunds, D. Gelb, R. Hadland, P. Hockley, Alexander Jones, T. Malzbender, Helen Mangou, Xenophon Moussas, Andrew Ramsey, John Seiradakis, John M. Steele, Agamemnon Tselikas, and Mary Zafeiropoulou

Turnhout, BE: Brepols, 2016. Pp. 310. Special edition: *Almagest* 7.1, Paper €33.00

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In 1900, Greek sponge-divers, on their way back home to Symi in the eastern Aegean from working the sponge-beds off the Libyan coast of Africa, found by chance the wreck of an ancient ship in deep water at the bottom of the sea off the coast of the small island of Antikythera, south of the Greek mainland. The recovery of the contents of the wreck constitutes one of the first concerted underwater excavations and it brought to the surface a significant collection of Greek sculptures in bronze and marble. These remains, some well known, others not so, recently became the focus of their own special exhibition in the National Archaeological Museum in Athens [Kaltsas, Vlachogianni, and Bouyia 2012].

One particular part of the cargo has attracted the interests of historians of science: the remains of a technical instrument, which were recognized soon after discovery. (The details of the recognition in 1902, attributed to Spyridon Staïs, the Minister of Education in the Greek government, are given in the book under review [38–41]; see Kaltsas, Vlachogianni, and Bouyia 2012, 18–31 and 228 for a description of the discovery of all the finds in 1901–1902 and for the recognition of the instrument.)

In 1972, X-rays were taken of the Mechanism by radiographer Charalambos Karakalos for the physicist Derek de Solla Price. These showed that it originally comprised over 30 interlocking, toothed gears and several plates that were interrelated by their capacity to mark time in various ways: an Egyptian calendar; a zodiac-dial; and a star-calendar (*parapegma*). These

ISSN 1549–4497 (online) ISSN 1549–4470 (print)
Aestimatio 13 (2016–2018) 1–9

discoveries led Price to attempt a reconstruction and ultimately to publish his findings in a monograph [de Solla Price 1974]. For him, the instrument was a type of calendar-computer, a loose term nowadays since it was not programmable, but adequate for his time.

Ground-breaking though this research was and fundamentally important for our appreciation of the complexity and sophistication of the Antikythera Mechanism, more intensive techniques and ongoing physical reconstructions have been undertaken and have allowed investigators to refine or correct much of Price's interpretation and model.

In the 1990s, Michael Wright at the Science Museum in London and Allan Bromley at the University of Sydney became collaborators, working initially from the 1970s' X-rays but then developing their own. Since Bromley's untimely death, Wright has continued his research, in the process manufacturing the most detailed physical reconstructions of the Mechanism and explaining its underlying theory in a long series of publications. In its time, Mogi Vicentini's [2009] virtual reconstruction of Wright's model version 2 provided a brilliant opportunity to imagine the device as a whole and yet also to appreciate the extraordinary engineering skill that lies behind its construction. I have had the pleasure of seeing Wright's workshop and tools, which, barring a modern metal-working lathe, have largely adhered to the type of hand-tools available to an ancient craftsman. As I recall, in Wright's own estimation, it would take a single person a year working full-time with ancient techniques to make the Mechanism.

The most recent investigators of the device, and by far the largest group, are the members of the Antikythera Mechanism Research Group (AMRG), some of the fruits of whose work are assembled in the publication under review. Originally led by Tony Freeth and Mike Edmunds, the AMRG has comprised three teams from the UK, Greece, and North America: the academic team (Mike Edmunds, Tony Freeth, John Seiradakis, Xenophon Moussas, Yanis Bitsakis, and Agamemnon Tselikas); the Hewlett-Packard team (Tom Malzbender, Dan Gelb, and Bill Ambrisco); and the museum team (Eleni Mangou and Mary Zafeiropoulou from the National Archaeological Museum in Athens). Notable additions to the team after 2006 have been Alexander Jones, John Steele, and Magdalini Anastasiou. Jones figures as author or co-author of all the chapters in the present publication under review, and Bitsakis of all but one. Freeth withdrew from the AMRG in 2012 and has