Just when we thought we were evolving more brains, a 2,000 year old analogue computer made by the ancient Greeks is documented in Sky and Telescope article, 29 November 2006. It has been named the Antikythera Mechanism, and was made of brass enclosed in wood, but until recently, no one has had a close look at it. It turns out this mechanical device is really an analogue computer that "enabled astronomers in the second century BC to predict the movements of the Moon and Sun, along with lunar and solar eclipses. It could recreate irregularities in the Moon's motion due to its elliptical orbit. And it may have even enabled Greek astronomers to forecast the positions of the known planets."

Mike Edmunds of Cardiff University in Wales commented: "This device is just extraordinary, the only thing of its kind. The design is beautiful. The astronomy is exactly right. The way the mechanics are designed just makes your jaw drop." All this with a mechanical device instead of an electronic computer. Bradley Schaefer of Louisiana State University commented: "This is all rather exciting, as it shows a greatly more sophisticated technology for the Greeks than any had really imagined. And this technology is far in advance of anything else for almost a millennium."

## Sky and Telescope

Editorial Comment: If Schaefer had read the book "Longitude", the true story of English clockmaker John Harrison, "a lone genius who solved the greatest scientific problem of his time" in the 1700s, he would realize that we have always had brilliant minds among us. Harrison provided mariners with an accurate method of determining their longitude at sea, and he did it with the most accurate and miniature clocks that had ever been constructed. Mariners could use the sun in the day and the North Star at night (at least in the Northern Hemisphere) to accurately determine their latitude, but they had no clue about their longitude. Longitude was important because on frequent occasions ships and even flotillas would run aground because they didn't know exactly how far they were to the east and to the west. If Columbus had had one of Harrison's clocks with him 200 years earlier, he would have known he was going the wrong way to China. Scientists of Harrison's day were trying to use the appearance and disappearance of the Galilean moons behind Jupiter, and they disdained intensely Harrison's "stupid" little machines. Of course, Jupiter could only be seen at night, and only on cloudless nights, and then only when it was above the horizon at night. Today mariners avoid running onto rocks by using clocks that are not much more accurate than those Harrison was crafting 400 years ago. One of Harrison's wooden clocks, located on the tower of a horse barn in England, is still keeping accurate time to this day - and because of the "oily" type of wood he used, it never needs oiling.

## Ancient Analogue Computer

The Bible tells us that even further back in the early chapters of Genesis 4, there were highly skilled and obviously intelligent craftsmen. "We" haven't gotten smarter - we just have to use different technology. Most of the old knowledge and skills have been lost - I doubt if anyone could construct an Antikythera computer today, or a wooden clock that can keep accurate time for centuries - or a huge seagoing wooden ship the size of Noah's ark, that worked with no sea trials and no life boats.

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