



Restoring Genius

Archimedes was one of the most brilliant people ever, on a par with Einstein and Newton. Yet very little of what he wrote still exists because of the passage of time, and because many copies of his works were erased and the cleaned pages were used again. One



of those written-over works (called a palimpsest) has resurfaced, and advanced digital imaging techniques using statistics and linear algebra have revealed his previously unknown discoveries in combinatorics and calculus. This leads to a question that would stump even Archimedes: How much further would mathematics and science have progressed had these discoveries not been erased?

Image © The Owner of the Archimedes Palimpsest.



The *Mathematical Moments* program promotes appreciation and understanding of the role mathematics plays in science, nature, technology, and human culture.