

## → 1001 inventions

### The greatest scientific advances from the Muslim world

From the elephant clock to the camera obscura, here are six amazing inventions from between the 9th and 15th centuries



Ibn Firnas' flying contraption

There is no such thing as Islamic science - for science is the most universal of human activities. But the means to facilitating scientific advances have always been dictated by culture, political will and economic wealth. What is only now becoming clear (to many in the west) is that during the dark ages of medieval Europe, incredible scientific advances were made in the Muslim world. Geniuses in Baghdad, Cairo, Damascus and Cordoba took on the scholarly works of ancient Egypt, Mesopotamia, Persia, Greece, India and China, developing what we would call "modern" science. New disciplines emerged - algebra, trigonometry and chemistry as well as major advances in medicine, astronomy, engineering and agriculture. Arabic texts replaced Greek as the fonts of wisdom, helping to shape the scientific revolution of the Renaissance. What the medieval scientists of the Muslim world articulated so brilliantly is that science is universal, the common language of the human race. The [1001 Inventions](#) exhibition at [London's Science Museum](#) tells some of the stories of this forgotten age. Here are my top six exhibits . . .