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On the Shoulders of Giants

Talk about international collaboration. When Polish astronomer Johannes Hevelius began working on his 1687 map of the stars, he wrote to German theologian Henry Oldenburg, secretary of the Royal Society in England. The request: to locate the 15th century star map of astronomer Ulugh Beg of Samarkand and translate it from Persian. The Royal Society fulfilled his request, and the map guided Hevelius's new observations. This frontispiece to Hevelius's map pays homage to Beg; as Hevelius presents the book to Urania, muse of astronomy, the top 10 astronomers of all time look on. Beg is third from left.

"He crossed many centuries with that image, putting many people shoulder to shoulder," says astrophysicist Rim Turkmani, curator of *Arabick Roots*, which opened 9 June at the Royal Society in London. "It's a nice gesture from him to say thank you." The exhibition's letters, manuscripts, diagrams, and instruments chronicling the flow of scientific knowledge from the Arab world to Europe in the 17th century will be on view until November.

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