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## BOOK NOTES: Muslim Books Spotlighted at Book Expo America 2009

By **David M. Kinchen**  
Huntingtonnews.net Book Critic

*Don't know much about history*  
*Don't know much biology*  
*Don't know much about a science book*  
*Don't know much about the French I took*

*But I do know that I love you*  
*And I know that if you love me too*  
*What a wonderful world this would be*

*Don't know much about geography*  
*Don't know much trigonometry*  
*Don't know much about algebra*  
*Don't know what a slide rule is for -- Sam Cooke (1931-1964) "Wonderful World,"*  
1959 -- written by Cooke,  
Herb Alpert and Lou Adler

The line from the song "Wonderful World: "Don't know much about history...." is applicable to today's situation, especially the history of non-Western civilizations.

This May's Book Expo America (BEA) 2009 saw an attempt to rectify this lack of knowledge, with the presentation of "1001 Inventions: Muslim Heritage in Our World": (Foundation for Science Technology and Civilisation, Manchester, England). The second edition of this coffee-table book, published in 2007, was shown, along with the introduction of more than 300 children's books to the North American market.



"This is the first time that BEA brings such a large regional focus to its attendees, and we are delighted that it will bring Arab books, publishers, booksellers and authors in such significant numbers to New York," commented Lance Fensterman, Vice President and Show Director for BEA. The event was held at the Jacob K. Javits Convention Center in Midtown Manhattan.

Amr Moussa, General Secretary of the Arab League, was in attendance to launch the event, which featured publishers from 8 Arab countries, including Algeria, Egypt, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, Tunisia, and the UAE (with Abu Dhabi, Dubai and Sharjah) showcasing their portfolio of novels and children's books. The show program included a series of debates and discussions about Arabian book culture and publishing challenges.

Professor Salim Al-Hassani is Chief Editor of the "1001 Inventions" book and chairman of the Foundation for Science, Technology and Civilisation, UK. He explained: "We are a non-political and non-religious initiative dedicated to increasing awareness of the scientific advancements made during the 1000 year period inaccurately labeled 'the Dark Ages of Europe.' We're here to share with the American people the cultural roots of modern science as a vital tool for resolving problems of social cohesion and world diplomacy. Recognizing and appreciating the early contributions and inventions by pioneers from all over the world including from Arabia, North Africa, Turkey, China and India will increase understanding and cross-cultural appreciation between societies."

"1001 Inventions" highlights the scientific achievements from the Muslim world which form the basis of our modern technological age, such as inventions in the fields of robotics, engineering, physics, medicine, chemistry, astronomy and mathematics. Other Muslim cultural phenomena, such as coffee drinking and the three course meal, are also alive and well in North America, which is why Prof. Al-Hassani believes "New York is the perfect place to create a new space for dialogue using the diverse cultural roots of science as one of the instruments for social cohesion and world peace."

I've examined "1001 Inventions" and find it a remarkable achievement, fusing Muslim and European -- along with Chinese and Indian -- achievements in science, medicine, the arts, engineering and architecture. The period from about 600 to 1600 C.E (common era) represented a cross fertilization in these fields, with interaction between Muslim ruled territories -- especially those in today's Spain -- more common than most people today realize. The windmills that the fictional character Don Quixote tilted at in Spain were a Muslim invention, first developed in Turkey and later brought to Spain and even later to the present day Netherlands where they are an iconic symbol of the constant fight to keep the seas from engulfing the Low Countries.

Not only Muslims, but Christians and Jews contributed to the development of many of the achievements in the Muslim world in that era, which generally was much more inclusive of the two older Abrahamic religions than they are today.

Further information is available at [www.1001inventions.com](#) or by visiting [www.MuslimHeritage.com](#), which are the world's leading online sources for Muslim heritage information.

### About BookExpo America

- BEA is North America's largest gathering of book trade professionals, typically attracting between 20,000 – 30,000 visitors.
- Book industry professionals who attend BEA include: booksellers; book distributors; marketing and publicity professionals; editors, agents; scouts. BEA is also attended by assorted film and TV professionals and is covered widely by the media for the attention it brings to upcoming books as well as for the notable authors it attracts to the event itself.
- The show occupies approximately 175,000 – 200,000 square feet of exhibit space, not including conference sessions, autographing or the Rights Center.
- Approximately 1000 authors participate in BEA, and there are over 1500 exhibitors at BEA.
- There are approximately 75 educational conference sessions offered at BEA.

More information about "1001 Inventions": [www.1001inventions.com](#)



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