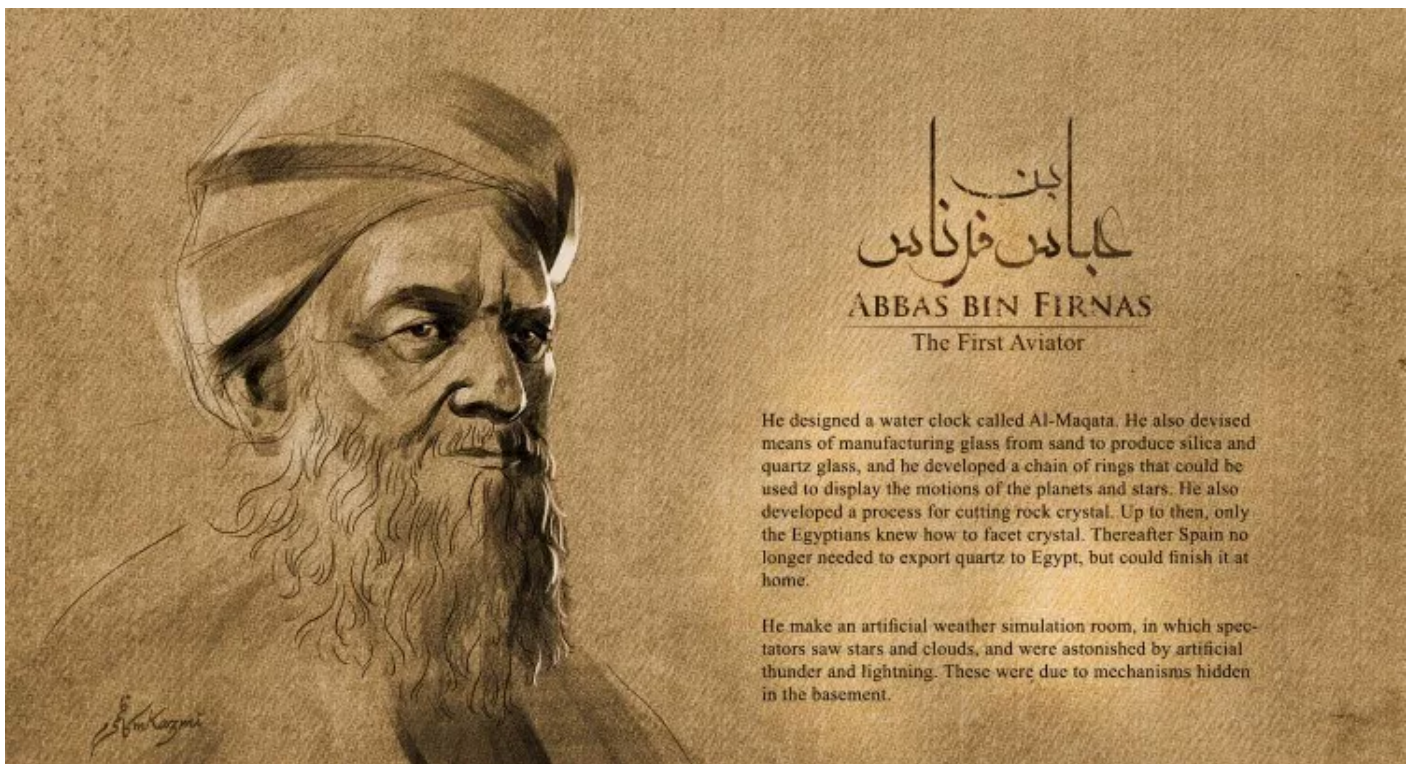


Flight



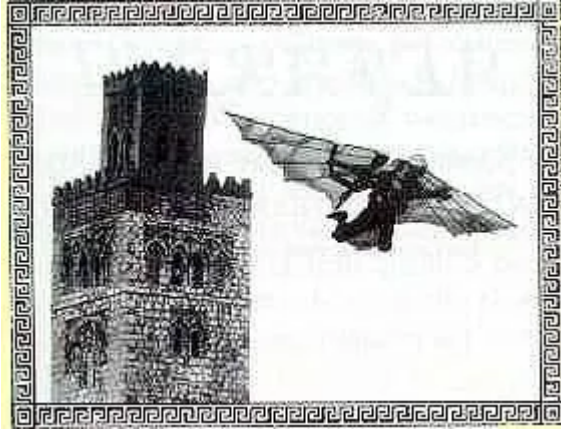
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The First Man to Fly Abbas Ibn Firnas

Ibn Firnas of Islamic Spain invented, constructed and tested a flying machine in the 800's A.D. Roger Bacon learned of flying machines from Arabic references to Ibn Firnas' machine. The latter's invention antedates Bacon by 500 years and Da Vinci by some 700 years.

About 875, Abbas Ibn Firnas built a flying apparatus placing feathers on a wooden frame; creating the first documented record of a very primitive glider. One of the two surviving versions of his flight states:



Having constructed the final version of his glider, to celebrate its success he invited the people of Cordoba to come and witness his flight. People watched from a nearby tower as he flew some distance, but then the glider plummeted to the ground causing him to injure his back..."

Depiction of Ibn Firnas in Flight 875 CE

The second account adds that, after failing to land successfully, Ibn Firnas claimed that he had not noticed how birds use their tails to land and that he had forgotten the tail on his flying apparatus.

The back injury prevented Ibn Firnas from ever trying again. Grounded, he went on to create a mechanized planetarium with revolving planets that simulated thunder and lightning

and evolved a formula for manufacturing artificial crystals. Soon after, in 888 however, he died, primarily as a result of an ongoing struggle with his back injury from the flight.