

Abbas Ibn Firnas



Abbas Ibn Firnas (810–887 A.D.), also known as Abbas Qasim Ibn Firnas, was a Muslim Andalusian polymath: an inventor, engineer, aviator, physician, Arabic poet, and Andalusian musician. Of Berber descent, he was born in Izn-Rand Onda, Al-Andalus (today's Ronda, Spain), and lived in the Emirate of Córdoba. He is known for an early attempt at aviation.

Ibn Firnas designed a water clock called Al-Maqata, devised a means of manufacturing colorless glass, he invented various glass planispheres, made corrective lenses ("reading stones"), developed a chain of rings that could be used to simulate the motions of the planets and stars, and developed a process for cutting rock crystal that allowed Spain to cease exporting quartz to Egypt to be cut.

In his house he built a room in which spectators witnessed stars, clouds, thunder, and lightning, which were produced by mechanisms located in his basement laboratory.

He is also said to have made an attempt at flight using a set of wings. The only evidence for this is an account by the Moroccan historian Ahmed Mohammed al-Maqqari (d. 1632), composed seven centuries later.

The crater Ibn Firnas on the Moon is named in his honor.

[Condensed from Wikipedia]

