

Abul Qasim Ibn Firnas Encyclopedia Article

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Abul Qasim Ibn Firnas

d. 873

Arab Spanish inventor who devised and demonstrated a glider. A native of Cordoba, Ibn Firnas experimented with the manufacture of glass and developed a chain of rings to depict the motions of the stars and planets. Eventually, however, he found his greatest interest in flying and constructed a rudimentary flying machine, which much of Cordoba's population gathered to watch him demonstrate. Unfortunately, after flying just a short distance, the craft fell to earth, severely wounding Ibn Firnas, who died shortly afterward.