



PLATO'S ALARM CLOCK

AND OTHER AMAZING
ANCIENT INVENTIONS

James M. Russell

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Discover the true history of some of the most extraordinary inventions of the ancient world, mysterious devices that we can't recreate today and the original versions of modern technology.

We all like to think we are pretty smart. New medical advances seem to come along every day; space travel suddenly doesn't seem so difficult; self-driving cars are no longer a thing of the future... but if we were stranded on a desert island tomorrow, most of us wouldn't know how to catch a fish or start a fire, let alone rebuild all that extraordinary technology we now rely on.

From brain surgery in the Stone Age and Chinese whisky from the 7th century BC, to Damascus steel - once the hardest metal in the world, which we no longer know how to make - *Plato's Alarm Clock* collects together the stories of hundreds of ancient devices, inventions and breakthroughs from around the world, giving us a fascinating glimpse into past eras that were far more technologically advanced than we sometimes realise.

James M. Russell has a philosophy degree from the University of Cambridge, a post-graduate qualification in critical theory, and has taught at the Open University in the UK. He currently lives in North London and works as a freelance writer, designer and editor. He is the author of *A Brief Guide to Philosophical Classics*, *A Brief Guide to Spiritual Classics* and *A Traveller's Guide to Infinity*.



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