

Great Inventions of the 19th Century | Innovative technologies | Other innovative technologies

Various innovative technologies have empowered human society. Some of these inventions were immense and some were tiny, but all of them were important. Electricity is considered the backbone of any modern industrial society.

The 19th century had witnessed many great achievements in putting electric power, with its almost limitless potential, into service. The electric battery was invented as early as 1800. A few years later in 1821 the first electric motor was invented and successfully tested. But the greatest achievements happened towards the end of the century. In 1891 the first electric power station was built in the UK. The basis had been laid for endless practical applications of electricity including transportation, heating, lighting, communications and many others. Some other smaller but no less significant innovations were introduced during this period such as telescopes, compasses and the fountain pen. The objects of common use are perhaps the best examples of how the innovations and the exchanges of ideas were absorbed by local historical traditions, giving life to an innovative cultural synthesis.



Working Number: RO 008

Name: Patent for the invention of the fountain pen with a replaceable ink cartridge

Holding Museum: National Museum of Romanian History

Date: 25 May 1827

Materials: -

Curator Justification: Among the inventions of the 19th century, one of the most common objects in the world, the fountain pen with replaceable ink cartridge, was invented by the Romanian mathematician, engineer and pedagogue, Petrache Poenaru. He studied in France and obtained a patent from the French government.



Working Number: FR 037

Name: Siever's patent pedestrian carriage for Ladies and Gentlemen

Holding Museum: National Library of France

Date: 19th century

Materials: -

Curator Justification: The 19th century also saw the invention of new and strange means of transport such as the bicycle. Like trains and the railways, these means of transport caught the imagination through prints and drawings. In France many similar prints and drawings were published throughout the 19th century.



Working Number: PT 007

Name: Lisbon Astronomical Observatory

Holding Museum: -

Date: 1867 (first observations)

Materials: -

Curator Justification: Portugal joined the 19th-century trend of regarding technical progress as sign of development. The Astronomical Observatory responded

to the need to study the world with the criteria of scientific knowledge and classification.



Working Number: PT 090

Name: Travel notebook for meteorological observations

Holding Museum: Maritime Museum

Date: 1884

Materials: Paper

Curator Justification: Meteorological, geographical and anthropological data were collected in notebooks. This notebook belonged to the Portuguese Commander Hermenegildo Capelo, who used it during an expedition to the interior of the African continent from Angola to Mozambique in 1884–85. The colony of Mozambique had an important Muslim community.



Working Number: TR2 075

Name: Barometer

Holding Museum: Istanbul Railway Museum

Date: 1888

Materials: Metal

Curator Justification: This barometer is one of the tools used on the new railways built in Turkey after the Crimean War.



Working Number: MO 017

Name: Electric telegraph machine

Holding Museum: Itisalat al-Maghrib Museum

Date: 1907

Materials: -

Curator Justification: During the reign of Sultan Mulay 'Abd al-Aziz telegraph lines were introduced in Morocco.



Working Number: UA 031

Name: Perpetual calendar

Holding Museum: Sharjah Museum of Islamic Civilisation / Sharjah Museums Department

Date: Hegira 1327 / AD 1909

Materials: Nielloed silver, copper alloy, iron, wood, printed paper, printed textile

Curator Justification: This object is a European calendar designed according to Ottoman, Armenian and Caucasian aesthetics. It displays innovations that entered deeply into everyday life reshaped and adapted in continuity with local artistic traditions.



Working Number: PT 079

Name: Electrical command and control panel for Tejo Power Station I generators

Holding Museum: Electricity Museum

Date: 1918

Materials: -

Curator Justification: Later in the 19th century, power stations generated electricity for public use. Electricity was a symbol of industrialisation and modernisation for every country.



Working Number: TR2 071

Name: Morse transmitter

Holding Museum: Istanbul Postal Museum

Date: 1930

Materials: Metal

Curator Justification: The Morse transmitter continued to be crucial for the transmission of information, even after the invention of the telephone.



Working Number: ET1 042

Name: A photo of the Dairy Laboratory at Fu`ad Agricultural Museum

Holding Museum: Bibliotheca Alexandrina

Date: 16 January 1938 (Photo taken during the inauguration of the museum)

Materials: -

Curator Justification: Later in the 20th century, the application of technology to a wide range of sectors, among them agriculture, was common. The changes had been so deep that it was felt necessary to document traditional procedures and new technology and hygiene standards. Technical "progress" was still seen as the milestone in the advancement of the states.
