

(repeated on page 6 and 292), since it was not really a "reconquest" – an idea rejected by historians long ago – but a conquest.

Mònica Rius

Emilie Savage-Smith (ed.), *Magic and Divination in Early Islam*. The Formation of the Classical Islamic World, volume 42. Ashgate-Variorum. Aldershot, 2004. LI + 394 pp.

The Formation of the Classical Islamic World is a Variorum collection in which, unlike what is characteristic of the well known Variorum Reprints, the unity of the volume is given by the subject, not by the author. Each volume contains a set of papers, reprinted as they appeared in the original publication in case English was the language used, or retyped if they are English translations of papers previously published in another language. Each paper preserves its own original pagination if it was originally published in English, but the volumes have also been paginated continuously which, in my opinion, is an improvement in relation to the lack of such pagination in the Variorum Collected Studies series. Early Islam usually means from the beginning to the middle of the eleventh century, although some volumes go occasionally further. The editor is responsible for the selection of the materials and writes an introductory chapter including a bibliography. Indices of names and subjects are added at the end. Several volumes of this collection are relevant to the history of Arabic and Islamic science: such is the case of volume 40 (*The Rise of Arab-Islamic Medicine*, edited by Lawrence I. Conrad, who is also the general editor of the collection), volume 41 (*The Exact Sciences in Early Islam*, edited by Jamil Ragep) and volume 47 (*The Formation of al-Andalus. Part 2: Language, Religion, Culture and the Sciences*, edited by M. Fierro and J. Samsó).

*Magic and Divination in Early Islam* is a welcome addition to the series. Edited by a

highly competent scholar like Emilie Savage-Smith, it deals with a subject narrowly related to science and it is a useful complement to Charles Burnett's *Magic and Divination in the Middle Ages* (Variorum, 1996), centred in materials which circulated, in Arabic and Latin in the Iberian Peninsula. The main problem Savage-Smith had to face was the dispersion of the subject: there are too many different kinds of Magic as well as a multitude of different techniques for divination. Her excellent introduction presents an updated state of the art of the main topics related to Magic (precedents in Arabic and other cultures, amulets, talismans, magic squares) and to Divination (Geomancy, letter-number interpretation, Astrology and Physiognomy). The criterion used, both in the introduction and in the selection of the reprinted papers, seems to have been avoiding highly technical matters and tending towards historical, sociological or ethnological approaches. Thus, the importance of astrological criteria in order to select the propitious moment for making a talisman – a topic underlined by Ibn Khaldūn in the *Muqaddima* as well as by the *Ghāyat al-ḥakīm/ Picatrix* – is left aside and the same can be said about the development of mathematical astrology, a branch of applied mathematics highly improved in Islamic civilisation and which is the only part of the subject that can be considered scientific. This is why we will not find anywhere a single reference to John North's important book *Horoscopes and History* (London, 1986) or to the many papers related to this subject by, for example, E.S. Kennedy. This is merely a remark and not a criticism: with a subject as large as this, the editor had a right to make her own choices and she has done it in a coherent way. Incidentally, Savage-Smith's introduction as well as many of the papers contain obvious references to the aforementioned *Ghāyat al-ḥakīm/ Picatrix*, unduly attributed to Maslama al-Majrīṭī and usually considered to have been written – together with the alchemical *Rubāt al-ḥakīm* – towards the middle of the 11th c.: I think

one should take into account the publication by Maribel Fierro of an important paper ("Bāṭinism in al-Andalus. Maslama b. Qāsim al-Qurṭubī (d. 353/964), author of the *Rutbat al-ḥakīm* and the *Ghāyat al-ḥakīm* (Picatrix)", *Studia Islamica* 84 (1996), 87-112) in which she argues convincingly that the author of both works could have been Maslama b. Qāsim al-Qurṭubī, an author of the first half of the 10th c.

The papers included in the selection are: 1) J. Henninger, *Beliefs in Spirits among the Pre-Islamic Arabs* (translated from the German) dealing mainly with the belief in *jinn*s (pp. 1-53); 2) F.E. Peters, *Hermes and Harran: the Roots of Arabic-Islamic Occultism* (pp. 55-85) which raises the most interesting hypothesis about a very early introduction of Greek materials in Islam which might have passed by the Sabians of Ḥarrān to the early Ismāʿīlīs; 3) M.W. Dols, *The Theory of Magic in Healing* (pp. 87-101) deals very little, in spite of its title, with the application of Magic to Medicine, but it is rather a useful commentary on the information on Magic that can be found in Ibn al-Nadīm's *Fihrist* and in Ibn Khaldūn's *Muqaddima*.

Chapters 4, 5 and 6 deal with talismans: 4) A. Fodor, *The Rod of Moses in Arabic Magic* (pp. 103-123) is a convincing essay on Jewish influence on Arabic Magic; 5) Tewfiq Canaan, *The Decipherment of Arabic Talismans* (pp. 125-177) is a reprint of two old papers, first published in 1937 and 1938, which maintains all its exceptional value: it is a deep analysis of talismans and amulets of different kinds, most of them belonging to the author's personal collection, and it is full of useful information, related, for example, to some clues for the interpretation of a few of the so-called "lunette" signs. It has been a surprise for me to discover the existence of signs of this type with numerical value which use a system that reminds me of the one analysed by D.A. King in *The Ciphers of the Monks* (Stuttgart, 2001); 6) Venetia Porter, *Islamic Seals: Magical or Practical* (pp. 179-200) discusses the total or partial amuletic

value of seals, some of which have a personal or administrative character.

Chapter 8, Emilie Savage-Smith and Marion B. Smith, *Islamic Geomancy and a Thirteenth-Century Divinatory Device: Another Look* (pp. 211-276), is the result of rewriting a previous paper published by the two authors in 1980, and it is another impressive essay which begins with a thorough survey of Arabic geomantical literature, which underlines the more or less mythical origins of this kind of written sources, apparently related, on the one side, to Indian (Ṭumṭum al-Hindī), and, on the other, to Maghribī (Berber) authors. The analysis of the written literature is followed by a most detailed description of a 13th century instrument, extant at the British Museum, the purpose of which is to produce, mechanically, the random figures of the geomantic tableau and furnish other kind of information (lunar mansions) useful for the prediction.

Chapters 7, 9, 10 deal with Astrology. 7) is Charles Burnett, *Weather Forecasting in the Arabic World* (pp. 201-210), a first publication presenting the main results of the author's recent research on astrometeorology, based on Arabic sources and their Latin translations. Here we find an analysis of the *anwā'* system, which, being related to the solar calendar, cannot, in principle, be considered astrological but is a result of the fact that rains take place predominantly in certain periods of the solar year. Burnett also studies the works of al-Kindī, which present a mixture of Aristotelian materials and astrological techniques. Thirdly he turns to the astrological-meteorological predictions based on the lunar mansions (also used in the geomantical device of chapter 8) in a series of Latin texts ascribed to a certain "Jafar Indus". 10) is George Saliba, *The Role of the Astrologer in Medieval Islamic Society* (pp. 341-370), one of the two essential essays on the social history of astronomy and astrology in the Islamic Middle Ages: the second is David King, "On the role of the muezzin and the muwaqqit in medieval Islamic societies"



in his gigantic book, *In Synchrony with the Heavens. Studies in Astronomical Timekeeping and Instrumentation in Medieval Islamic Civilization* (Leiden-Boston, 2004), pp. 623-677. Both deal with the professional activities of medieval astronomers who could only earn their living by becoming astrologers or, after the 13th c., *muwaqqits*, that is to say, astronomers in the service of a mosque. Saliba gives, in pp. 342-342, a list of Arabic writers who discussed the validity of astrology and attacked this discipline. Yahya J. Michot, in chapter 9 (*Ibn Taymiyya on Astrology: Annotated Translation of Three Fatwas*, pp. 277-340) adds the name of Ibn Taymiyya (1263-1318) to the list of antiastrological polemicists and offers a very careful annotated translation of three *fatwās* by this author related to the subject.

Julio Samsó

Rosenfeld, B. and Ihsanoğlu, E. *Mathematicians, Astronomers and Other Scholars of Islamic Civilisation and their Works (7th -19th c.)*, Istanbul: IRCICA, 2003. 833 pp.

I have often heard Prof. E.S. Kennedy talk about the importance of G.P. Matviyevskaya and B.A. Rosenfeld's *Matematiki i astronomiya musul'manskogo srednevekov'ya i ikh trudy* (Moscow, 1983) which he calls "the Russki Suter". Unlike him, I have not been able to look at the original publication in Russian, mainly because of my incapacity to read this language. This is why I can only welcome the publication of this updated English translation, coauthored by Boris A. Rosenfeld and Ekmeleddin Ihsanoğlu, the latter being a scholar who has contributed so much to the elaboration of a series of biobibliographical surveys related to the history of Ottoman science which have become a standard part of the bibliographical equipment historians of Islamic science need now to have at hand's reach. Among them Rosenfeld and Ihsanoğlu's *Mathematicians,*

*astronomers...* constitute the most general and comprehensive tool.

The volume here reviewed is structured following the model of H. Suter's *Mathematiker und Astronomen der Araber und ihre Werke* (Leipzig, 1900; *Nachträge*, Leipzig, 1902): a biobibliographical survey of Arabic mathematicians and astronomers, although here the scope of interest is extended to other scholars, mainly geographers and cartographers. 1423 scientists of known date are studied, the earliest being the Caliph 'Alī ibn Abī Tālib (d. 661) and the latest Mushīr al-Dawla Muhandis Bāshī (d. 1862) (pp. 13-420). On each author we have a short biographical note, followed by a general bibliography and a list of works, both extant and not extant. When these works are available, the authors provide titles, list of manuscripts, editions, translations and scholarly works on them. These works are classified under a system of letters (M = mathematics, A = astronomy, Me = mechanics, Ph = physics, Mu = music etc.) followed by a consecutive number within each category. Transliteration of Arabic names and titles of works is usually careful (within each biographical note, but not in its heading written in small capitals or in the final index), but the translation of titles is not always accurate. Several appendices include 1) the name and works of 288 authors whose time of life is unknown (pp. 423-449), 2) a list of anonymous works in libraries, in alphabetical order of the countries and cities to which the libraries belong (pp. 451-497), 3) a list of libraries (including manuscript catalogues) in which relevant manuscripts are extant (pp. 499-512) and 4) a list of surveys which can be very general (e.g. "Arabic science") or deal with specialized subjects (e.g. "magic squares") (pp. 513-516). The bibliographical references in the main part and in the surveys are given in an abbreviated way (i.e. the name of the author followed by a number). The key to these abbreviations is to be found in pp. 517-739 where we have an enormous bibliography in alphabetical order of the authors. The volume ends with a