In Synchrony with the Heavens. Studies in Astronomical Timekeeping and Instrumentation in Medieval Islamic Civilization. 2 vol., Leiden, Brill, 2004-2005, vol 1: lvii+930 p.; vol. 2: lxxvi+1066 p.

Benno Van Dalen

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- 1 These two massive volumes constitute an extended version of what the author had announced and referred to for nearly 30 years as SATMI (Studies in Astronomical Timekeeping in Medieval Islam), but has now in fact become much more than that. The 18 parts (9 in each volume) represent the vast amount of sources, both manuscripts and instruments, that the author has studied and evaluated during the last 30 years. The twelve studies in Volume 1, entitled "The Call of the Muezzin", deal with the following topics: tables for timekeeping; tables for prayer times; arithmetical shadow-schemes; Muslim prayers in general; muezzins and muwaqqits; universal solutions; orientation of Islamic architecture and ventilators; and practical astronomy in mosques and monasteries. The twenty chapters in Volume 2, called "Instruments of Mass Calculation" with a wink to the American president at the time of the invasion of Iraq of 2003, are centered on instruments through the following themes: astronomical instrumentation; an approximate formula for timekeeping; universal horary quadrants and dials; various early Islamic astrolabes; selected late Islamic astrolabes; a medieval Spanish astrolabe; geographical data on early instruments; and the quatrefoil. Part 18, finally, presents the checklist of Islamic astronomical instruments that has resulted from the author's intensive investigations of museum collections during the period 1990-2005. Every single chapter is now the state of the art on its subject and will be

required reading for anyone venturing into the same areas. Also those chapters that were published before have all been revised and updated with the latest references.

- 2 *In Synchrony with the Heavens* is not only a monumental collection of studies on Islamic astronomical manuscripts and instruments by the number-one specialist in these fields, it is also a personal document that came a short time before King's retirement as full professor of history of science at the University of Frankfurt (Germany). Every single chapter in the two volumes is dedicated to a friend and/or colleague with a personal introduction of a couple of pages, thus showing the major influences that shaped the author's career during the last 35 years.

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Thèmes : 10. Histoire des Sciences et des Techniques

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