
Cataloguing this finely illustrated volume, which reproduces a star catalogue that is ostensibly associated with Alfonso X of León and Castile, would be an excellent exercise for an advanced degree in librarianship, although only after the candidate had passed a qualifying examination in weightlifting. (My copy, printed on loaded paper rather than parchment, tips the scales at 4.5 kg.) Very many individuals have played a part in its production, and here I shall speak chiefly of the three named authors. The publisher will be well known to all who have visited the book fairs at international conferences of medievalists—at Kalamazoo, for example—where his magnificent manuscript facsimiles, the best of them printed on parchment, are coveted by all who see them. Patrimonio Ediciones have an eye to many different types of purchaser, with the owner of a Renaissance Library at one extreme and the possessor of a framed individual page at the other. (The easiest way of discovering the category into which one falls is to visit www.patrimonioediciones.com.) Art is the dominant theme, and the quality of reproduction is paramount, but scholarship is of course needed in its support. In the present case, the two principal authors provide a detailed art-historical commentary on the manuscript illustrations, while José Martínez Gásquez adds a brief introduction to the associated star catalogue, and an expert translation of its Latin text into Spanish. The entire text (with the facsimile pages of star lists, in black and white, not the coloured constellation figures) is then repeated in English translation (by Roberto Latona), and is repeated in the same style, in German translation (by Sibylle Stroh). The volume ends with a fairly comprehensive bibliography, listing about 160 items. The resulting volume is therefore really three books in one, each of about two hundred pages, to which the fine colour illustrations that come in the Spanish section bring that up to 257 pages. Those for whom the coloured plates are needed to justify the purchase may wish to know their extent. In addition to some smaller reproductions, there are 44 full pages of colour, each page devoted to a constellation figure, so altogether picturing 18 northern constellations, 12 zodiacal, and 14 southern.

The manuscript that serves as the basis for this reproduction is Codex 78D12 in the Kupferstichkabinett of the Staatliche Museen Berlin. Had the commentary been based only on what is visible in this one manuscript, it would have been a much more abbreviated affair. In fact it draws on Pierre Knecht’s *I libri astronomici di Alfonso X in una versione fiorentina del trecento* (Zaragoza, 1965), originally a dissertation for the Zurich Faculty of Letters. I did not see any reference to the important text and concordance of the relevant Florentine version (Vatican MS Apostolica 8174) that was published by J. A. Levi in 1993.

The basic Alfonsine star catalogue, *Libro de las estrellas fijas del octavo cielo*, was one of sixteen treatises in the collection known as the *Libros del saber de astrologia*. They survive in a manuscript that was copied in the royal scriptorium, now Universidad Complutense MS 156. Another such collection that is still in Spain (Biblioteca Na-
cional, MS 3306) omits the star catalogue, while a third collection in the same library (MSS 1197 and 18668(54)) contains a part of the star catalogue, some of it in the form of an eighteenth-century copy based on the Complutense manuscript. There are other versions, but mostly derivative. The two leading contributors wish to show that the Berlin manuscript is related to what is known from surviving Spanish material, but they treat questions of transmission only lightly. Since a full set of Alfonsine astronomical tables would have included the star catalogue in addition to planetary tables, and since there has been much modern controversy over the extent of the Castilian element in the ‘Alfonsine’ planetary tables that circulated throughout Europe in the fourteenth century and later, the pros and cons in this controversy need to be weighed by anyone aiming at a complete historical discussion. The technicalities of Alfonsine astronomy have been comprehensively treated in recent studies by such writers as Julio Samsó, Mercè Comes, José Chabás, Bernard Goldstein, Avilés García, Emmanuel Pouille, and (especially for the connection with al-Ṣūfī’s *Book of the Constellations*) Paul Kunitzsch. The present work supplements their findings with many useful iconographic observations, which I will summarize after mentioning briefly the Alfonsine context, and before turning to a few very simple astronomical indications that none of the three contributors to the new volume took into account.

Their aim was to present the Berlin codex as an authentic ‘Alfonsine’ work, but there are many ways in which this can be understood. There are potential links between the Berlin catalogue of stars and that in Paris Arsenal MS. 1036, but this is a secondary matter that should not be allowed to divert attention away from the fundamental nature of the work. The Berlin catalogue contains no discursive canons, but begins with the words ‘Imagines Ptolomei cum stellis suis verificatas tempore Alfonsi regis’, which seems plain enough, although it is in fact an erroneous statement. As I shall show later, the star coordinates belong to the time of the immediate Arab prototype, the work of al-Ṣūfī (around AD 964). Alfonso lived three centuries later—he ruled from 1252 to his death in 1284. The present edition refers to various codicological studies, pointing to a northern Italian scriptorium of the fourteenth century, so the remaining question of Alfonsine content can only be one of deciding whether it stands squarely in an Iberian tradition in some other sense. The criterion used is its iconography.

The iconographic arguments offered are not difficult to follow, although they require the dedicated reader to seek out illustrations from elsewhere, or rest content with descriptions of them, whether from the Arsenal manuscript (accepted as being in the same iconographic tradition) or other Alfonsine materials, primarily those in Spain. A basic premise is that the Arsenal manuscript is the only thirteenth-century work outside Spain containing the ‘new iconography’, coming from Ptolemy via al-Ṣūfī. This new style is characteristic of three manuscripts of the thirteenth century: (1) The *Libro de las figuras de las estrellas fijas del octavo cielo* in Universidad Complutense, MS.156; (2) The *Primer lapidario* found in Escorial, MS. h.I,15; and (3) The *Libro de Astronomagia* in Vatican Library, MS. Reg. Lat. 1283. Domínguez and Trevino, anxious to dispense with any Sicilian connection, also lay emphasis on the fact that the constellations illustrated in the *Liber introductorius* of Michael Scot, as found in the