

Presentation

In an outburst of professional optimism and feeling as the heirs of Lupitus Barchinonensis (fl. 975-995), the first known *Catalan* who became seriously interested in Islamic Science, we have decided to launch an international Journal for the History of the Exact and Natural Sciences in Islamic Civilisation. This is due to our awareness of the fact that our subject has every year a larger number of adepts: the increase in the number of papers in this field presented at the International Congress of History of Science in Liège, as compared to Zaragoza, is quite impressive. The project was born in the Arabic Department of the University of Barcelona, but we were lucky enough to obtain intellectual support from other friends and colleagues both in and outside Spain. Our warmest gratitude goes to the persons who have accepted the invitation to become members of the Editorial and Advisory Boards and very especially to contributors who had sufficient faith in the forthcoming journal to provide us with the necessary number of papers which permit the publication of this first issue. On the other hand we should also thank the Generalitat de Catalunya and University of Barcelona who have furnished the necessary financial help which allows us to begin this adventure.

Our new journal will only accept papers written in English and Arabic, these two languages being the standard linguistic tools used, in principle, by most of the members of our scholarly community. As it aspires to respect the spirit of the Commission for the History of Science in Islamic Civilisation of the International Union of History and Philosophy of Science - Division of History of Science, we should apologise for not using other extremely important languages - such as Persian or Turkish - used in Islamic countries. The reason is merely practical: editing papers in these languages would make our task more difficult.

We expect to publish a volume per year and to cover the Exact and

Natural Sciences in Islamic lands. The contents of this first issue deal with the Exact Sciences, but this is due to the human fact that the research of the Barcelona group focuses in the History of Astronomy and our personal contacts on an international level are far more developed in the field of the Islamic Exact Sciences. You may see, however, that we have included, in our editorial and advisory boards, historians of agronomy and medicine and this points to the fact that we are entirely open to the publication of good papers in these and other related fields of research.

The name of the journal, *Suhayl*, demands a certain amount of explanation. A short name was necessary, as long titles are often shortened in ways which are not self-explanatory. As we wanted to have a double cover (in English and in Arabic), it seemed sensible to use an Arabic word which, in transliteration, did not require diacritical marks which are a burden for librarians and editors of other journals of a more general character. *Suhayl* seemed to be a good choice for it is a star with strong Islamic implications: the main axis of the Ka'ba was oriented to the rising point of Suhayl which, consequently, was often used as a *qibla* indicator.

Lupitus Barchinonensis