



Gideon Bohak - Charles Burnett

Thābit ibn Qurra
On Talismans

Ps.-Ptolemy *On Images 1-9*
Liber prestigiorum Thebidis
of Adelard of Bath



SISMEL
EDIZIONI DEL GALLUZZO ~ 2021

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This book contains a reconstruction of Thābit ibn Qurra's *On Talismans*, based on a recently-discovered Judaeo-Arabic text in the Cairo Genizah and the Latin versions. *On Talismans*, probably written in Baghdad in the late ninth century, was the most authoritative medieval text on the procedure for making talismans that depended for their efficacy on the natural influences of the stars. The Genizah manuscripts also include the first nine talismans of the *On the Images on the Decans of the Signs* attributed to Ptolemy, a work which forms a natural complement to Thābit's text and is therefore included in this edition. Editions of the major excerpts of, and quotations from, these two texts in Hebrew, Arabic and Greek, have been added, and the Latin translation of another (lost) Arabic version of Thābit's text – the *Liber prestigiorum Thebidis* – made by Adelard of Bath, completes the volume. Adelard's version adds elements of ceremonial magic (including prayers to spiritual forces) to the effects of the stars. The texts edited here are essential sources for our knowledge of the theory and practice of astrological talismans in the Middle Ages and early modern period.

Charles Burnett is Professor of the History of Arabic/Islamic Influences in Europe at the Warburg Institute, University of London. His research centres on the transmission of texts, techniques and artefacts from the Arab world to the West, especially in the Middle Ages. Among his books in this subject area are *The Introduction of Arabic Learning into England* (1997), *Arabic into Latin in the Middle Ages: The Translators and their Intellectual and Social Context* (2009) and (with Keiji Yamamoto), *The Great Introduction to Astrology* by Abū Ma'šār (2019).

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GIDEON BOHAK - CHARLES BURNETT

Thābit ibn Qurra *On Talismans*
and Ps.-Ptolemy *On Images 1-9*
Together with the *Liber prestigiorum*
Thebidis of Adelard of Bath



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