

Zael, *De electionibus*

Notice by David Juste

Author: Sahl b. Bishr (Baghdad, first half of the ninth century).

Original title: *Kitâb al-Ikhtiyârât ‘alâ ’l-buyût al-ithnai ‘ashar* ('Book of Elections According to the Twelve Houses').

Translation: translator unknown; the work already existed in Latin in the twelfth century.

Significance: in the Latin tradition, the *De electionibus* forms the fourth part of Zael's corpus (see description of Zael's *Introductorium*).

Contents: one of the most popular works on elections (i.e. choice of propitious time to undertake an action) in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance. As the Arabic title indicates, subjects are arranged according to the twelve houses. For instance, questions about money and business (including alchemy here) are dealt with under the heading of the second house.

Reproduction: Venice, Petrus Liechtenstein, 1509, sig. a₂r-[b₄r] [Warburg FAH 765].

Title: *Liber electionum Meseallach et Ptholemei feliciter incipit.*

Inc.: 'Omnes concordati sunt quod electiones sint debiles nisi in divitibus...' [TK, 985].

Expl.: '... Mercurii 22 graduum et dimidii, Lune 6 graduum et tertie unius.'

Bibliography: F.J. Carmody, *Arabic Astronomical and Astrological Sciences in Latin Translation. A Critical Bibliography*, Berkeley-Los Angeles, 1956, p. 41 (nr. 4); F. Sezgin, *Geschichte des arabischen Schrifttums*, VII, Leiden, 1979, pp. 126-127 (nr. 3). The Arabic and Latin versions have been edited in C.M. Crofts, *Kitab al-Ikhtiyarat ‘ala l-buyut al-ithnai ‘asar by Sahl ibn Bisr al-Israi’ili, with Its Latin Translation De electionibus*, Thesis, University of Glasgow, 1985.