

Juan Acevedo

Alphanumeric Cosmology From Greek into Arabic

The Idea of Stoicheia Through the Medieval Mediterranean

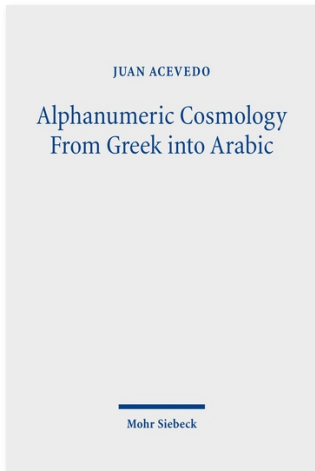
[Alphanumerische Kosmologie vom Griechischen zum Arabischen. Die Idee der Stoicheia durch das mittelalterliche Mittelmeer.]

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Juan Acevedo embarks on a semantic journey to track the origin and adventures of the Greek term *stoicheion*, which for at least eighteen centuries, from Pythagoras to Fibonacci, simultaneously meant »element«, »letter«, and »numeral«. Focusing on this triple meaning and on how it was translated and interpreted in Latin, Hebrew, and Arabic – especially in key texts of the Abrahamic faiths – a metaphysical study takes shape. With touches of alchemy and theology, it reveals how a shared fundamental alphanumeric cosmology underlay many basic paradigms of science and faith around the Mediterranean until the advent of the Indo-Arabic numerals broke the »marriage« of letter and numeral. Careful readings of Plato, Philolaos, Nicomachus and Philo, of Genesis and the Sefer Yetsira, of the Qur'ān, the Ikhwān al-Ṣafā', and Ibn 'Arabī are all woven together into a synthesis full of implications for many disciplines.

Juan Acevedo Born 1971; studied Classics at Universidad de Los Andes, Venezuela; 2001 BA; teaching Spanish, academic publishing (Islamic Texts Society; The Matheson Trust) in the UK, specialised in Arabic-English bilingual typesetting and Comparative Religion; 2018 PhD from the Warburg Institute, University of London; presently post-doctoral research in Lisbon for the ERC Rutter Project in History of Science.

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