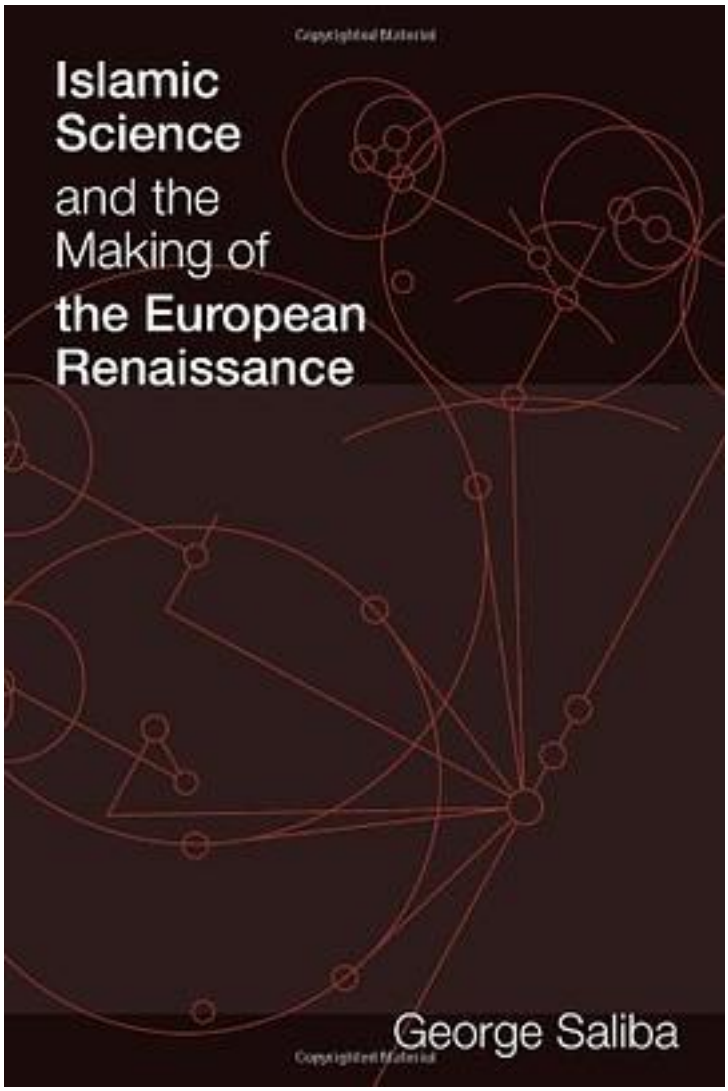
Islamic Science and the Making of the European Renaissance



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The Islamic scientific tradition has been described many times in accounts of Islamic civilization and general histories of science, with most authors tracing its beginnings to the appropriation of ideas from other ancient civilizations--the Greeks in particular. In this thought-provoking and original book, George Saliba argues that, contrary to the generally accepted view, the foundations of Islamic scientific thought were laid well before Greek sources were formally translated into Arabic in the ninth century. Drawing on an account by the tenth-century intellectual historian Ibn al-Nadim [macron over i] that is ignored by most modern scholars, Saliba suggests that early translations from mainly Persian and Greek sources outlining elementary scientific ideas for the use of government departments were the impetus for the development of the Islamic scientific tradition. He argues further that there was an organic relationship between the Islamic scientific thought that developed in the later centuries and the science that came into being in Europe during the Renaissance.Saliba outlines the conventional accounts of Islamic science, then discusses their shortcomings and proposes an alternate narrative. Using astronomy as a template for tracing the progress of science in Islamic civilization, Saliba demonstrates the originality of Islamic scientific thought. He details the innovations (including new mathematical tools) made by the Islamic astronomers from the thirteenth to sixteenth centuries, and offers evidence that Copernicus could have known of and drawn on their work. Rather than viewing the rise and fall of Islamic science from the often-narrated perspectives of politics and religion, Saliba focuses on the scientific production itself and the complex social, economic, and intellectual conditions that made it possible.

作者介绍:

George Saliba (1939～) is a Palestinian Christian Professor of Arabic and Islamic Science at the Department of Middle Eastern, South Asian, and African Studies, Columbia University, New York, United States, where he has been working since 1979.

Saliba received his Bachelor of Science (1963) in mathematics and a Master of Arts (1965) from the American University of Beirut; he earned a Master of Science degree in Semitic languages and a doctorate in Islamic sciences from the University of California, Berkeley. He has received a number of awards and honors, including the History of Science Prize given by the Third World Academy of Science in 1993, and the History of Astronomy Prize in 1996 from the Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Science.

In his website (http://www.columbia.edu/~gas1/saliba.html) he writes about himself: "I study the development of scientific ideas from late antiquity till early modern times, with a special focus on the various planetary theories that were developed within the Islamic civilization and the impact of such theories on early European astronomy."

Saliba has been doing research about possible transfer of mathematical and astronomical knowledge from the Islamic world to Europe during the 15-16th centuries.

目录:

标签

科学史

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评论

以天文学为例，伊斯兰科学纠正了希腊人的天文学错误，形成伊斯兰色彩独特科学体系；在科学与宗教的相遇中，科学被迫趋于下风，而且从事研究的伊斯兰学者本事是为了获得统治者的任用，而非钻研精神。意大利文艺复兴时期，间接影响到了哥白尼。总的来说，文科生因天文学术语而吃力，理科生又不需要历史。

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书评

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