Astronomical tables, as documents intended for practical use rather than scientific insight, often leave distinct traces of their origins, and so can provide unique insights on the spread of ideas through communities. In medieval Islam, the table tradition arrived from India through Persian intermediaries in the 8th century. By the end of the 9th century, eastern Islam had seen a conversion to Ptolemaic methods, but these newer methods saw only limited play in the west (al-Andalus and the Maghrib), which developed from this point onward largely separated from the east. Bursts of activity and innovation occurred in the east from the late 10th century onward, spurred by the founding of several observatories and associated centers of research. (Received September 15, 2013)