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Nayrīzī: Abū al-'Abbās al-Fadl ibn Hatim al-Nayrīzī

Flourished Baghdad, (Iraq), last half of the 9th century

Nayrīzī is reputed to have been among the best mathematicians and astronomers of his day, though not much biographical information is known. In astronomy, his best-known work, a commentary on Ptolemy's *Almagest*, is no longer extant. This must have been one of the earliest commentaries to be written in Arabic, because the *Almagest* had been first translated into Arabic only a century earlier. He is also credited with the composition of two *zīj*es (astronomical tables used for predicting planetary motions). The longer work, according to the bio-bibliographer Ibn al-Qifti, was based on the *Sindhind*, an Indian classic in astronomy. The shorter work was presumably based on the *Almagest*. These works were cited by several astronomers from the 'Abbāsīd period, although they are no longer extant. Three shorter, more specialized treatises survive: (1) on the spherical astrolabe; (2) on finding the qibla direction (the direction toward Mecca, toward which pious Muslims pray five times a day); and (3) on constructing hour lines in a hemispheric sundial. Ibn Yūnus, in his own *zij*, criticized some elements of Nayrīzī's astronomical work while praising him as a renowned mathematician.

Gregg De Young

Selected References

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