

Ādamī: Abū ‘Alī al-Husayn ibn Muḥammad al-Ādamī

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Flourished Baghdad (Iraq), circa 925

Ādamī is noted for his work on instruments. Ibn al-Ādamī, presumably his son, wrote an influential astronomical handbook with tables (*zīj*) that was based on Indian sources. The father is mentioned in Ibn al-Nadīm's *Fihrist* (dating from the 10th century), where he is called al-Ādamī. Because of the similarity in names, the two have often been confused in modern sources.

According to the *Fihrist*, Ādamī is the author of a work on sundials, and indeed there is an extant Paris manuscript by him that deals with vertical sundials and contains universal auxiliary tables that are used to simplify calculations. These enabled the drawing of lines for vertical sundials inclined to the local meridian at any desired angle for any latitude. [Birūnī](#) tells us in his great work on astrolabes (the *Istī’āb*) that Ādamī was the first person to construct a “disc of eclipses” for demonstrating solar and lunar eclipses.

The son, Ibn al-Ādamī, was famous for a *zīj* entitled *Naṣm al-iqd*, which was completed after his death by his student al-Qāsim ibn Muḥammad ibn Hishām al-Madā'inī, who published it in 949/950. This nonextant work is referred to by several later authors, including [Ibn Yūnus](#) (died: 1009) and [Sā‘id al-Andalusi](#) (died: 1070). From the latter we learn that Ibn al-Ādamī's *zīj* was based on the Indian methods contained in the so-called *Sindhind*, a Sanskrit work translated into Arabic by [Fazārī](#). Sā‘id also provides crucial evidence that the theory of variable precession (or trepidation) that became known in Europe under the name of [Thābit ibn Qurra](#) may instead have had its source in the *zīj* of Ibn al-Ādamī, who himself may have gotten the theory from Thābit's grandson [Ibrāhīm ibn Sinān](#). Sā‘id also informs us that Ibn al-Ādamī was a source for the story of how Indian astronomy came to Baghdad in the early 770s by way of an ambassador to the court of Mansūr.

Selected References

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