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Sibṭ al-Māridīnī: Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad Abū ‘Abd Allāh Badr [Shams] al-Dīn al-Miṣrī al-Dimashqī

Gregg De Young

Born possibly Damascus, (Syria), 1423

Died possibly Cairo, (Egypt), circa 1495

Sibṭ al-Māridīnī was a prolific author of astronomical texts, which were still being used and studied into the 19th century. Little is known with certainty about his life. It is thought that he grew up in Damascus, where his maternal grandfather, ‘Abd Allāh ibn Khalīl ibn Yūsuf Jamāl al-Dīn al-Māridīnī (died: 1406), was the *muwaqqit* (timekeeper in charge of regulating the daily rituals of the Islamic community) of the Umayyad Mosque. Later he traveled to Cairo, where tradition places him as the student of **Ibn al-Majdī**.

Sibṭ al-Māridīnī wrote extensively on mathematics and mathematical astronomy. Like his grandfather, he was especially interested in astronomical instruments. The bio-bibliographical sources list some 25 treatises, many of which exist today in multiple copies. According to the historian al-Jabartī (died: 1822), Sibṭ al-Māridīnī's works on *mīqāt* (ritual timekeeping) and on astronomical instruments were still being studied in the curriculum of Cairo's al-Azhar, one of the preeminent educational institutions in the Islamic world, at about the beginning of the 19th century.

Among Sibṭ al-Māridīnī's works related to astronomy and instruments are: (1) *Risāla fī al-‘Amal bi-l-rub’ al-mujayyab* (on using the sine quadrant); (2) *Raqā’iq al-ḥaqā’iq* (on calculating with degrees and minutes); (3) *Zubd al-raqā’iq* (this may be an extract from the previous treatise); (4) *Muqaddima* (introduction) to sine problems and spherical relations; (5) *al-Ṭuruq al-saniyya* (on sexagesimal calculations); (6) *al-Nujūm al-zāhirāt* (on the *muqanṭarāt* quadrant); (7) *Qaṭf al-zāhirāt* (apparently an extract from the previous treatise); (8) *Hāwī al-mukhtaṣarāt* (another discussion of the *muqanṭarāt* quadrant); (9) *Iḏḥār al-sirr al-mawḏū’* (use of a specialized quadrant); (10) *Hidāyat al-‘āmil* (on another kind of specialized quadrant); (11) *Hidāyat al-sā’il* (on the quadrant mentioned in the previous entry); (12) *al-Maṭlab* (on the sine quadrant); (13) *al-Tuḥfa al-mansūriyya* (on quadrants); (14) *Muqaddima* (introduction to construction of sundials); (15) a treatise on the equatorial circle; and (16) a treatise on the quadrant, astrolabe, and calendar.

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