

ZEITSCHRIFT FÜR GESCHICHTE  
DER ARABISCH-ISLAMISCHEN  
WISSENSCHAFTEN

herausgegeben von  
Fuat Sezgin



in Zusammenarbeit mit  
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Gesine Yildiz und Farid Benfeghoul

Band 20-21

MADDE YAYIMLANDIKTAN  
SONRA GELEN DOKÜMAN

01 Temmuz 2021

2012-2014  
Institut für Geschichte der Arabisch-Islamischen Wissenschaften  
an der Johann Wolfgang Goethe-Universität  
Frankfurt am Main

Kabisi

110045

AL-QABĪSĪ'S TREATISE ON THE DISTANCES AND SIZES OF THE  
CELESTIAL BODIES: EDITION AND TRANSLATION.

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1. Introduction and summary

Abu'l-Şaqr 'Abd al-'Azīz ibn 'Uthmān al-Qabīṣī was a tenth-century astrologer and astronomer who was born near Mosul in Northern Iraq.<sup>1</sup> His magnum opus *Introduction to Astrology* (al-mudhkal ilā şinā'at aḥkām al-nujūm) was translated into medieval Latin, whence he is known in the West as *Alcabitius* or *Alcabitius* [1]. Al-Qabīṣī dedicated this work to the Hamdanid ruler Sayf al-Dawla, who reigned between 945 and 967 CE in Aleppo. This paper contains a critical edition and English translation of another treatise which al-Qabīṣī dedicated to Sayf al-Dawla, on the distances and sizes of celestial bodies. A facsimile of the only complete Arabic manuscript of this treatise has recently been published by the Institute for History of Arabic-Islamic Science in Frankfurt [25, 156-167]. The editorial procedures, the English translation and the Arabic text of al-Qabīṣī's treatise are found in Sections 2 and 3 of this paper and in the Appendix. The introduction continues with a brief summary and analysis of the treatise.

Al-Qabīṣī's treatise on the sizes and distances of celestial bodies is part of a long tradition which started with Ptolemy (ca. 150 CE). The Ptolemaic universe consists of a set of concentric (hollow) spheres, which can be compared to the layers of an onion. The earth is surrounded by seven very large spheres which belong to the moon, Mercury, Venus, the sun, Mars, Jupiter, and Saturn respectively. Each sphere contains "its" celestial body but the rest of the sphere is transparent. The sphere of Saturn is surrounded by a thin eighth sphere containing all fixed stars.

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<sup>1</sup> For biographical data on al-Qabīṣī see [1, 1-7]. For his extant works see [22, V:311-312, VI:208-210, VII:170-171], [20, p. 85, no. 205].

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