

## HISTORY

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Research paper

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**THE UNKNOWN HARITAGE OF BAB AL-ABWAB:  
“SHARH AL-SHIHAB” BY ABU AL-QASIM AL-BABI  
AND “TUHFAT AL-ASHAB” BY ABU BAKR AL-DARBANDI**

*Abstract.* The paper explores the earliest theological work in the North Caucasus, “Sharh al-Shihab”, written by a theologian of the 11th century from Bab al-Abwab, Abu al-Qasim al-Warraq al-Babi (d. between 1098-1004). This work is a commentary on the work of an Egyptian qadi and preacher Abu Abdullah al-Quda’i (d. 1062) “Shihab al-Akhbar”, in which the author collected various aphorisms and maxims attributed to the Prophet Muhammad. During our study, we revealed numerous lists of “Sharh al-Shihab” stored in libraries and archives in various parts of the world. Some of these lists are used in our paper in order to analyze the text of the work. The study brings to light new valuable information from the life of the Muslim community in the Caucasus in the 11-12th centuries. In the course of the study, it was found that al-Warraq’s disciple, a famous Sufi and theologian from Bab al-Abwab, Abu Bakr al-Darbandi (d. in the first third of the 12th century) also composed his own commentary on the “Shihab al-Akhbar” by al-Quda’i, taking as a basis the commentary of his teacher. The lists of this previously unknown work, which the author entitled “Tuhfat al-Ashab fi Sharh al-Shihab”, were also uncovered. Some of them became the subject of this study. Thus, the paper examines two works of the 11-12th centuries, compiled in Bab al-Abwab. The study suggests that the writing of these works is a reflection of the general processes in the socio-religious sphere that took place in the Muslim world during the specified period.

*Keywords:* al-Quda’i; al-Warraq; al-Darbandi; Shihab al-Akhbar; Sharh al-Shihab; Tuhfat al-Ashab; Islam; hadith

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## ИСТОРИЯ

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Исследовательская статья

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## НЕИЗВЕДАННОЕ НАСЛЕДИЕ БАБ АЛ-АБВАБА: «ШАРХ АШ-ШИХАБ» АБУ АЛ-КАСИМА АЛ-БАБИ И «ТУХФАТ АЛ-АСХАБ» АБУ БАКРА АД-ДАРБАНДИ

*Аннотация.* В статье впервые исследуется самое раннее на Северном Кавказе богословское сочинение «Шарх аш-шихаб», принадлежащее перу богослова XI в. из Баб ал-абваба, Абу ал-Касима ал-Варрака ал-Баби (ум. между 1098–1004 гг.). Сочинение представляет собой комментарий на труд египетского кадия и проповедника Абу Абдуллаха ал-Куда'и (ум. в 1062 г.) «Шихаб ал-ахбар», в котором автор собрал различные афоризмы и сентенции, приписываемые пророку Мухаммаду. В ходе исследования были выявлены многочисленные списки «Шарха аш-шихаб», хранящиеся в библиотеках и архивах в различных частях мира. Некоторые из этих списков были использованы в статье для анализа текста сочинения. Исследование выявило новые ценные факты из жизни мусульманской общины на Кавказе в XI–XII вв. В ходе исследования было установлено, что ученик ал-Варрака, известный суфий и теолог из Баб ал-абваба, Абу Бакр ад-Дарбанди (ум. в первой трети XII в.) также составил свой комментарий на «Шихаб ал-ахбар» ал-Куда'и, взяв за основу комментарий своего учителя. Списки этого ранее не известного сочинения, которое автор назвал «Тухфат ал-асхаб фи шарх аш-шихаб», также были выявлены. Часть из них стала предметом исследования данной работы. Таким образом, в статье исследуются два сочинения XI–XII вв., составленных в Баб ал-абвабе. Исследование показало, что составление этих работ явилось отражением общих процессов в общественно-религиозной сфере, происходивших в мусульманском мире в указанный период.

Ключевые слова: ал-Куда'и; ал-Варрак; ад-Дарбанди; Шихаб ал-ахбар; Шарх аш-Шихаб; Тухфат ал-асхаб; ислам; хадис

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## Introduction

The history of “classical Islam” in the Caucasus is still an insufficiently studied issue due to the scarcity of written monuments of that era that have survived to this day. A significant contribution to the study of that period was made by A. Alikberov with his detailed monograph “The Era of Classical Islam in the Caucasus” [1]. The monograph was written on the basis of a unique work “Rayhan al-Haqa’iq wa Bustan al-Daqa’iq” (“The Basil of Truths and the Garden of Subtleties”), written by the scholar and Sufi from Bab al-Abwab (al-Bab, al-Darband: present-day Derbent) Abu Bakr Muhammad b. Musa b. al-Faraj al-Darbandi (d. in the first third of the 12th century) – a major Muslim Asharite theologian, Shafi’i jurist and Sufi<sup>1</sup>. This monograph provides extensive and valuable information about the life of the Muslim community of Bab al-Abwab in the 10-12th centuries, in which Abu Bakr al-Darbandi’s teacher and mentor Abu al-Qasim al-Warraq stands out.

Abu al-Qasim Yusuf b. Ibrahim b. Nasr al-Warraq al-Babi (d. between 1098-1104) was a major muhaddis and spiritual leader of the Shafi’i community in Bab al-Abwab, a descendant of Syrian immigrants. Judging by *nisba*, he came from a family traditionally engaged in the sale (and possibly manufacture) of paper. In search of knowledge, Abu al-Qasim al-Warraq traveled to many cities of the Islamic world, lived in Baghdad for a long time. In adulthood, he was the imam of a mosque in the district (mahalla) of Hims in Bab al-Abwab. Abu al-Qasim al-Warraq is the author of a number of works, including “Sharh al-Shihab” – the earliest theological work in the North Caucasus [2, p. 20; 1, p. 262-264]. According to Salah al-Din al-Safadi (d. 764/1363), Abu al-Qasim al-Warraq arrived in Baghdad in 475 on his way to *Hajj*, bringing with him his work “Sharh al-Shihab”. Thus, we propose to consider 1082 (475 AH) as the upper point of dating the time of the writing of his work [3, vol. 29, p. 33].

While examining the “Sharh al-Shihab”, we learned about the existence of another, previously unknown, work of Abu Bakr al-Darbandi – “Tuhfat al-Ashab”. Due to the fact that both of the works of the teacher and the student are directly related to each other, we focused our research on both of them in our paper. This study aims to examine these works, introduce the materials of these manuscripts to the public, which may be useful for researchers of the history of the “classical” period of Islam in the Caucasus and highlight the common motives for composing these works.

## “Shihab al-Akhbar” by Abu ‘Abdullah al-Quda’i

The work “Sharh al-Shihab” is a commentary on the work of the Shafi’i jurist (*faqih*), historian, preacher and qadi Misr Abu ‘Abdullah al-Quda’i “Shihab al-Akhbar fi al-Hiqam wa al-Amsal wa al-Adab fi al-Ahadis al-Marwiyati ‘an al-Rasul al-Mukhtar” (“Meteor’ of legends on wisdom, aphorisms and ethical instructions in hadiths reported from the chosen

1. For more information about Abu Bakr al-Darbandi, see the above monograph by A. Alikberov [1, pp. 276-292].

Messenger”). Abu ‘Abdullah Muhammad b. Salama b. Ja‘far b. ‘Ali al-Quda‘i al-Misri al-Shafi‘i was born at the end of the 10th century. Some modern researchers believe that he was of Persian origin [4, p. 211], however, it is unclear what this statement is based on. The authoritative Muslim genealogists considered the *Quda‘a* tribe to be ancient Arabic, and Abu ‘Abdullah al-Quda‘i himself was considered among the prominent representatives of this tribe [5, vol. 10, pp. 446-447; 6, vol. 3, p. 43]. In his lifetime, al-Quda‘i traveled a lot to the cities of the Middle East for educational purposes. Having received a brilliant comprehensive education, he got a job as a secretary in the office of the Fatimid Vizier ‘Ali b. Ahmad al-Jarjara‘i (d. in 436/1045). Apparently, al-Quda‘i managed to establish relations with the Shi‘ite ruling elite, since a few years later he was appointed supreme Qadi over the Sunni population of Egypt [7, vol. 4, p. 151; 8, vol. 53, p. 167-170; 9, vol. 2, p. 230].

Al-Quda‘i had very high authority among Muslim scholars; he had numerous students in all parts of the Muslim world, including Bab al-Abwab. For example, the head of the Shi‘ite community of Bab al-Abwab and its supreme Qadi Ahmad al-Gada‘iri (d. in the mid. 11th century), while in Egypt, asked al-Quda‘i *ijazah* for the transmission of hadith for his sons Yahya and Ibrahim [10, p. 442]. Al-Quda‘i died in 1062.

Among the numerous works of al-Quda‘i in various fields of Islamic studies, his work “Shihab al-Akhbar”, which is a collection of hadiths, aphorisms and maxims attributed to the Prophet Muhammad, stands out. According to the author, 1200 dicta were collected in total, which he divided into 17 chapters. This work gained wide popularity during the author’s lifetime, due to the fact that the author compiled it in a new format. The novelty was that the author deliberately removed the *isnads* of these hadiths so that, according to the author, “it would be possible to easily and quickly memorize and master them”<sup>2</sup>. At the same time, the author composed another work, “Musnad al-Shihab”, in which he cited the same hadiths with *isnads*. In the preface to this work, al-Quda‘i wrote: “Who needs texts without *isnads*, can refer to that book (“Shihab al-Akhbar” – *author’s note*), and those who need to get acquainted with their *isnads* should turn to this book” [11, vol. 1, p. 34].

Before al-Quda‘i, *isnads* were not part of hadith collections, mainly for two reasons: they were not known to the author, or they had significant flaws and shortcomings from the point of view of experts in hadith. Al-Quda‘i for the first time compiled a set of hadiths without *isnads* with a new idea in mind – to adapt the texts of hadiths for memorization and thereby focus the reader’s attention primarily on mastering their meanings [12, p. 86]. Thus, al-Quda‘i laid a new tradition in the science of hadith, to which later some Muslim theologians would assign the term *tajrid* (lit.: exposure, stripping) – the removal of *isnads* from hadith collections. As the prominent Muslim *muhaddis* Ibn Rajab al-Hanbali (d. 795/1393) notes, subsequent scholars, when compiling their collections of hadith, took the work of al-Quda‘i as a model [13, p. 56].

The works “Shihab al-Akhbar” and “Musnad al-Shihab” gained huge popularity throughout the Muslim world – not only among Sunnis, but also Shi‘ites. Out of more than seventy different interpretations (*shuruh*), short transcriptions (*talhis*), critical analyses (*tankid*) and descriptions of the origins of hadith (*tahrij*), which at different times were written to

2. The text of «Shihab al-Akhbar» has not yet been published, but its preface is given in the introductory part of the publication «Musnad al-Shihab» [11, p. 11].

these works in Arabic and Persian, more than ten works belong to Imāmiyya theologians [12, pp. 87-96].

### “*Sharh al-Shihab*” by Abu al-Qasim al-Warraq

The work “*Sharh al-Shihab*” was known from the beginning of its existence to some Muslim scholars. The Muslim scholar and *muhaddis* from Andalusia al-Qadi ‘Iyad (d. 544/1149) reported that Sheikh Abu Sa‘id Haidar b. Yahya al-Jili al-Sufi “told him (*akhbarani*) ‘*Sharh al-Shihab*’ by Abu al-Qasim b. Ibrahim b. Yusuf al-Warraq al-Darbandi” [14, p. 144]. Sheikh Abu Sa‘id al-Sufi himself, according to al-Qadi ‘Iyad, studied hadiths from Abu al-Qasim al-Warraq and Abu Ishaq Ibrahim b. Ahmad al-Darbandi [14, pp. 142-143], by which he clearly means a well-known representative of the scholar dynasty of Imamites in Bab al-Abwab al-Gada’iri. Another theologian and historian Shams al-Din Yusuf b. ‘Abdullah, better known as Sibṭ b. al-Jawzi (d. 654/1256), quoted al-Warraq’s “*Sharh al-Shihab*” numerous times in his book “*Mir’at al-Zaman fi Tawarikh al-A‘yan*” [15, vol. 1, p. 244, vol. 4, p. 389, 393].

“*Sharh al-Shihab*” by al-Warraq is also mentioned in the famous work “*Kashf al-Zunun*” by Hajji Khalifa (d. 1068/1657), when he lists the comments written to the work of al-Quda‘i. However, there is a mistake in the author’s name: al-Warraq’s *nisba* instead of al-Babi (البابي) reads al-‘Abi 16 [(العابي)], vol. 2, p. 1067].

Al-Warraq’s work has survived to this day in several lists. The “*Catalogue of the Arab-Islamic Heritage of Manuscripts*”, published in 1991 in Jordan, mentions “*Sharh al-Shihab*” by Abu al-Qasim al-Warraq. The catalog contains library and archival data of ten lists of this work, stored in various libraries and archives of the world<sup>3</sup>.

Another list, according to the “*Catalogue of Arab Manuscripts*” of the National Library of Spain, is kept in Madrid in the National Library of Spain itself [17, p. 236]. The manuscript is dated Ramadan 899/June 1494.

Moreover, the text of “*Sharh al-Shihab*” has already become the object of critical research abroad. Thus, in 2015, it became the subject of a doctoral dissertation by Amin Nuri Aziz from the Institute of Arab History and Scientific Heritage in Baghdad under the scientific supervision of the famous Iraqi researcher and historian, Dr. Nabilya ‘Abd al-Mun‘im Dawud

3. The lists of this work are presented in the following libraries:

1. Istanbul. Topkapi Palace Museum (2/138), [26262 E.H. 655] – (L. 166) – 544 AH.
2. Istanbul. Al-Umumiya Library, 46, [81/911] – 655 AH.
3. Vatican City. Vatican Apostolic Library. Borgiani Collection, 1/263, [6/163] – (l. 59b–124b) as part of the collected manuscript. 8th century AH.
4. Baghdad. Saddam Manuscript Collection (now: Library of the National Museum of Iraq), 182, [13715] – (250 p.) – 961 AH.
5. Tunisia. National Library of Tunisia, collected manuscript (1/22), [collection: 89] – (L. 29b–48a) – 974 AH.
6. Baghdad. Saddam Manuscript Collection (now: Library of the National Museum of Iraq), 182, [9946] – (292 p.) – 12th century AH.
7. Baghdad. Saddam Manuscript Collection (now: Library of the National Museum of Iraq), 183, [2658] – (192 p.) – 12th century AH.
8. Baghdad. Saddam Manuscript Collection (now: Library of the National Museum of Iraq), 183, [28711] – (244 p.) – 12th century AH.
9. Baghdad. Saddam Manuscript Collection (now: Library of the National Museum of Iraq), 183, [10361] – (168 p.) – 1244 AH – the end of the manuscript is missing.
10. Baghdad. Saddam Manuscript Collection (now: Library of the National Museum of Iraq), 183, [2/25021] – (186 p.) – 1279 AH. [18, vol. 1, pp. 993-994].

[12, p. 92]. Unfortunately, we have not yet had a chance to familiarize ourselves with this work.

We managed to examine four lists of “Sharh al-Shihab”<sup>4</sup>. In accordance with the authenticity, accuracy and quality of the preserved texts, they were given the following marking:

– List A (Fig. 1): stored in the library at the Nuruosmaniye Mosque in Istanbul. The work is part of the collected manuscript (3/440, No. 588) and is entitled “Sharh Gharib Kitab al-Shihab” (“Explanation of the ‘obscure’ (*gharib*)<sup>5</sup> hadiths from the book “Al-Shihab”). The colophon of the list states that “the copying of this blessed manuscript ‘Sharh Gharib Kitab al-Shihab’ has been completed thanks to the exaltation of praise to Allah – the Bestowing Lord – by the hand of a poor, miserable, despicable slave hoping for the forgiveness of the Lord, Glorified and Most High, Salamis, the son of Musa, the son of Isra’il at-Turkmani from the Yurakir tribe on the twelfth day of the ‘separate’<sup>6</sup> month of Rajab, 721 of the Hijra ...”, which corresponds to August 6, 1327 according to the Gregorian calendar. The work is written on 80 sheets in a Middle Eastern, quite legible *naskh* and is divided into 13 chapters. The text is partially marked with diacritics, especially proper names, *nisbas* and toponyms. This list is the most complete piece and is possibly copied from the most authentic text of “Sharh al-Shihab”;

– List B (Fig. 2): stored in the Beyazit State Library in Istanbul. The work is entitled “Sharh Kitab al-Shihab”. The text is written on 98 sheets in a separate manuscript (46, [81/91]). The text contains a lot of errors and strikethroughs. The colophon reads: “A poor and miserable slave Ahmad Abu Bakr b. Zurayk al-Hariri copied it for himself.” The copying was completed “on Thursday, 9th of the month of Safar 655 AH,” which corresponds to February 25, 1257. List B is much shorter than list A. The text is divided into 12 chapters. Some differences in the texts of Lists A and B indicate that they were copied from different source versions of this work. Thus, when commenting on the hadith “There is no hijra after the conquest of [Mecca]” in List A, the author writes (L. 52b): “I was told by the sheikh, the preacher al-Ja’duvi al-Naisaburi, the guest of al-Bab, may Allah preserve this city...”. However, in List B, this text is given in the following form (L. 66b – 67a): “I was told by the sheikh, the preacher al-Ja’duvi al-Naisaburi during the arrival to us in the ‘frontier’ (sagr) of Al-Bab, may Allah preserve this city...”;

– List C (Fig. 3): stored in the Vatican Apostolic Library in Vatican City. The list is presented in the collected manuscript (Borgiani collection, 1/263 [6/163] – (L. 59b–124b)). The colophon is missing, but the manuscript is dated 786 AH, that is, 1384 according to the

4. The author expresses his sincere gratitude to Kamran Abdullaev, associate professor of the Department of Arabic and Rhetoric at Karadeniz Technical University of Turkey, for his help in getting an opportunity to get acquainted with these lists.

5. According to the terminology of Hadith studies, *gharib* (lit.: strange, alien) is a hadith, in one of the chain of the *isnad* of which there is only one narrator. Such a hadith is considered authentic if the narrator is genuine, but most often such hadiths were considered weak. Early Muslim *muhaddis* condemned the transmission of *gharib* hadiths, considering them potentially weak, but later, when the hadith *isnads* were thoroughly studied, the attitude towards *gharib* changed. A synonym of the term «*gharib*» is «*fard*» (lit.: separate, solitary). Sometimes the term «*gharib*» refers to the hadith, in the text of which obscure and vague expressions are used. In the case of “Sharh al-Shihab”, *gharib* refers specifically to its second meaning.

6. The seventh month of the Muslim calendar, Rajab, according to Muslim tradition, is called a separate, solitary (Rajab al-fard) due to the fact that it is isolated from the other three consecutive holy months: Zu al-Qa’dah, Zu al-Hijja and Muharram.

Gregorian calendar. The text is written on 59 sheets in *Andalusi* script and is divided into 13 chapters;

– List D (Fig. 4): stored in the King Abdulaziz Public Library. The list is presented in the collected manuscript (No. 826/2). The text is written on 37 sheets in *Maghribi* script and is divided into 13 chapters. The colophon is missing, but the manuscript is dated to Zu-l-hijjah 1313 AH, which corresponds to 1896 according to the Gregorian calendar.

These lists have significant inconsistencies in places. Thus, for instance, in List A, when commenting on the hadith (L. 26b) “Whoever fired at us at night is not one of us,” the following words are quoted: “I, as the author of this book, shall say: I asked a group of sheikhs and honorable persons whom I met during my trip to Baghdad and other cities, about the meaning of this hadith. I have not received a comprehensive and intelligible answer from anyone. I began to study and examine this hadith, but I did not find at least something that I could rely on and be satisfied with. Now I have postponed [the decision on it] and brought forward the Book of Allah Almighty, and the meanings of the hadiths of the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him, are difficult [to understand].” Further, the author warns against unreasonable interpretations of hadiths, but at the same time expresses his opinion about the meaning of hadith: “The meaning of hadith: whoever takes up arms against us at night is not one of us. There is another interpretation: whoever does not pray with us at night is not one of us.”

In List B (L. 35-36b), the first few sentences from the above commentary are given first, but then the text is crossed out, and a completely different lengthy commentary on this hadith is given instead. The meaning of the hadith in this commentary is understood as: “Whoever remembers us badly is not one of us.” Taking into account other discrepancies between the text of List B and List A, it can be assumed that the copyist used several original versions of this work.

In List C (L. 25b), only the first few sentences from the commentary of List A to the hadith are given, and in List D, the commentary, like the hadith itself, is completely absent. It should be noted that the content of Lists C and D correspond more to List B than to List A.

Each of the lists of “Sharh al-Shihab” after the traditional *basmala* begins with the author’s name: “Said Sheikh, Imam Abu al-Qasim Yusuf b. Ibrahim al-Warraq al-Babi,” but there are some differences in it. Thus, *nisba* al-Babi is missing from List D, and in List C his name is given as Abu al-Qasim b. Ishaq Ibrahim al-Warraq al-Babi.

This is followed by a preface in which the author reports that he noticed how students were completely passionate about studying the book “al-Shihab”. However, the fact that the text of the book contains many “vague and obscure passages” that some people have unwittingly begun to misinterpret prompted the author to write a commentary on this book after he carefully studied the works of outstanding scholars and clarified the meanings of hadiths from authoritative theologians. At the same time, the author notes (A: L. 1b): “I mainly relied on the works of famous scholars and prominent, authoritative persons, such as Imam Abu ‘Ubaid al-Qasim b. Sallam, Abu Muhammad ‘Abdullah b. Muslim b. Kutaiba al-Dinawari, Abu Sulaiman Hamd b. Muhammad al-Khattabi, Abu ‘Ubaid Ahmad B. Muhammad al-Harawi and Abu Mansur al-Azhari.” The mentioned people are well-known major linguists and theologians (*muhaddis* and, for the most part, Shafi’i jurists) of the 9-10th centuries,

without references to whose works on hadith were rarely done al-Warraq's era. One of them, Abu Sulaiman al-Khattabi, A. Alikberov considers Abu al-Qasim al-Warraq's teacher [1, pp. 299-300], which is unlikely, given the fact that al-Khattabi died in 998, and in this work al-Warraq does not mention that al-Khattabi was his teacher.

Towards the end of the work, the comments become shorter, being reduced to several sentences. When commenting on a hadith, the author often cites the opinion of his sheikhs and other scholars. He transmits part of the messages from his teachers both according to the formula indicating collective learning (*akhbarana*) and according to the formula indicating individual learning (*akhbarani*).

In some cases, when it is necessary to express one's position on a particular issue, or to highlight one's opinion among others, the author begins with the words "I shall say". From such author's notes, it would be possible to draw up a general picture of al-Warraq's religious views. However, the inconsistencies in the lists show that these texts were not spared by later corrections. For example, in the second chapter of List B (L. 41b), as well as in Lists C (L. 28b) and D (L. 18b), the author writes: "[I shall say:] scholars and religious luminaries are unanimous that the main groups of supporters of innovations are the following: *Rafidites*, *Kharijites*, *Qadarites* and *Murjiites*. Then eighteen communities (*taifa*) were formed in each of these sects. And in total there were seventy-two sects (*firka*)." This number corresponds to the well-known hadith, which prophesies about the appearance of 73 sects in Islam, only one of which will follow the truth. For this reason, even early Muslim doxographers most often identified four main religious and political groupings, on the basis of which the remaining numerous dogmatic schools (*firak*) were formed [19, p. 26], so that the total number of sects could be brought into line with the hadith. Nevertheless, in List A (L. 30b) in this text, three more sects are added to the number of the main groupings: *Jabriyya*, "*Mushabbiha*, who liken Allah to creatures" and "misguided *Mu'tazilites*". At the same time, the author of this correction, apparently, was not confused by the arithmetic discrepancy of these numbers.

"Sharh al-Shihab" is primarily of interest as a valuable source on the history of Muslim culture and education in the Caucasus. As mentioned above, Abu al-Qasim al-Warraq cites in the work a lot of statements of his sheikhs and acquaintances, from which it is possible to form a general picture of the author's circles.

Most often al-Warraq quotes his sheikh Abu Ishaq Ibrahim b. Faris al-Babi. The prominent scholar of al-Bab, *muhaddis* and poet Ibn Faris was the closest spiritual mentor and teacher of al-Warraq, to whom he issued *ijazahs* for various works, including his own. A. Alikberov provides a brief biography and some examples of Ibn Faris' poetic creativity [1, pp. 257, 302-303]. It follows from the "Sharh al-Shihab" that Ibn Faris studied at one time with a major linguist and *muhaddis* from Baghdad, Abu Ahmad al-'Askari (d. 382/993). Abu Tahir al-Silafi reports that Ibn Faris al-Darbandi died in 455/1063 [10, p. 247].

The most frequent mention after Ibn al-Faris al-Babi are two more sheikhs of al-Warraq. The first of them is the already mentioned Sheikh al-Ja'duvi al-Naisaburi. Al-Warraq calls him the Nishapur preacher (*al-wa'iz al-naisaburi*). Al-Ja'duvi taught him a number of books on hadith. In his work, the author notes several times that al-Ja'duvi was a guest not only in Bab al-Abwab itself, but also in its "frontier" (*sagr*) region. Abu Bakr al-Darbandi in the work "Rayhan al-Haqa'iq" in a message from his sheikh al-Warraq mentions the full name



of al-Ja'duvi: Abu al-Husayn 'Ali b. Muhammad al-Ja'duvi al-Naisaburi. It also follows from the book "Rayhan al-Haqa'iq" that al-Ja'duvi transmitted hadiths from a certain Abu Sa'id Ahmad b. Muhammad al-Bayhaqi (The Oriental Manuscripts Collection of the IHAE DFRC RAS. F. 14. Inv. 1. File 2191. L. 42b, 228a).

The second of them is al-Warraq's teacher, the "righteous sheikh and trustworthy" Mubarak b. Iqbal, whose lectures on hadith he attended.

Abu Tahir al-Silafi reports that the *faqih* from Bab al-Abwab Abu-l-Qasim Maimun b. 'Amr b. Muhammad al-Faqih attended lectures on hadiths of "al-Lariji, Ibn Iqbal, al-Ja'duvi and other scholars – both sheikhs of his city and visiting sheikhs" [10, p. 375]. Al-Silafi provides only the name of the first sheikh in full form. He is Abu Hafis 'Umar b. al-Hassan al-Lariji, who transmitted hadiths from the famous Shafi'i jurist from Baghdad Abu Hamid Ahmad b. Muhammad al-Isfara'ini (d. 406/1016) [20, p. 69]. Interestingly, Mubarak b. Iqbal is mentioned in all the lists of the work without any *nisba*, which leaves open the question of his place of origin.

Another local sheikh, whose lectures al-Warraq attended, is the "righteous sheikh" al-Hassan b. Dawud al-Babi. There is no additional information about this sheikh in "Sharh al-Shihab". In the work "Rayhan al-Haqa'iq", according to A. Alikberov, it is reported about three Sufi sheikhs (*al-Abdal*) living in Bab al-Abwab: Ibrahim, al-Hassan and al-Husayn. A certain Sufi sheikh from the eastern coast of the Mediterranean Sea, Abu 'Abdullah al-Antaki, having heard about them, went in search of them in Bab al-Abwab. Al-Antaki managed to meet them and spend several months in their company, during which they showed him examples of their piety [1, p. 252]. With a high degree of probability, we are talking about al-Hassan b. Dawud, with whom al-Warraq not only listened to hadiths, but also, perhaps, joined the Sufi teachings.

It follows from "Sharh al-Shihab" that al-Warraq took every opportunity to study with the sheikhs who visited not only his city, but also the neighboring Janza (present-day Ganja). Thus, he reports that he listened to hadiths while studying individually with a certain "righteous sheikh and reciter of the Quran (*muqri'*)" Abu Hamid al-Marwazi from Merv, who was visiting in Janza. Abu Hamid al-Marwazi transmitted him hadiths from Abu Ishaq Ibrahim b. al-Sa'labi, by which, perhaps, is meant the famous exegete (*mufassir*) of the Quran from Nishapur Abu Ishaq Ahmad b. Muhammad b. Ibrahim al-Sa'labi (d. 427/1035). Another al-Warraq's sheikh, from whom he listened to hadiths in the Janza district called Zahl (زَحْل), was the "preacher and authoritative ascetic" Abu Tahir al-Shirazi (in List A: Abu Zahir). In Janza, al-Warraq read in front of him a collection of hadiths written down at one time by al-Shirazi dictated to him (*amali*) by his sheikhs.

While in Hamadan, al-Warraq met with a certain scholar-*muhaddis* (*hafiz*) al-Sharif al-Husayni, from whom he also listened to hadiths. Al-Sharif al-Husayni is most likely not a name, but a title indicating that its bearer belongs to the descendants of the Prophet Muhammad through his grandson Hussein.

"Sharh al-Shihab" also reports that al-Warraq listened to hadiths from a certain sheikh, Imam al-Maghribi, who handed him a written copy (*munawala*) of "Musnad ar-Razi" with authorization (*ijazah*) to transmit hadiths from there. It is unclear who is this sheikh from West Africa, however, in the book "Rayhan al-Haqa'iq" al-Darbandi transmits a hadith from

al-Warraq, to whom it had been transmitted by Abu al-Ma‘ali ‘Abdullah b. ‘Abd ar-Rahman al-Maghribi al-Andalusi (The Oriental Manuscript Collection of the Institute of History, Archeology and Ethnography of The Russian Academy of Sciences, further as: OMC IHAE RAS. F. 14. File 2191. Inv. 1. L. 3a, 225b), which suggests that it is this person mentioned in “Sharh al-Shihab”. Salah al-Din al-Safadi mentions the same Abu al-Ma‘ali al-Maghribi among the persons from whom Abu al-Qasim al-Warraq transmitted hadiths, while noting that al-Maghribi was visiting in Bab al-Abwab. However, he mentions him as ‘Abd al-Rahman b. ‘Abdullah [3, vol. 29, p. 33].

Qadi, Imam Abu al-Mahasin al-Tabari also issued al-Warraq *ijazah* to transmit hadiths, in particular, from the book “Ma‘alim al-Sunan” by the aforementioned al-Khattabi. At the same time, as al-Warrak notes, al-Tabari personally issued this *ijazah* for him. This scholar is the well-known and authoritative Shafi‘i jurist, the supreme Qadi of Tabaristan Abu al-Mahasin ‘Abd al-Wahid b. Isma‘il al-Ru‘yani at-Tabari (killed in 502/1108), who, in turn, was the teacher of Abu Bakr al-Darbandi [1, p. 380].

Undoubtedly, al-Warraq’s social circle was not limited to these figures, and was much wider. However, the data presented clearly indicate the extensive ties of al-Warraq with the Muslim spiritual elite in many cities of the Muslim world. “Sharh al-Shihab” has provided an opportunity for the author to demonstrate these connections and show al-Warraq’s level of enlightenment and involvement in the general tradition of Muslim Hadith studies.

### **“Tuhfat al-Ashab fi Sharh al-Shihab” by Abu Bakr al-Darbandi**

Al-Warraq’s closest disciple Abu Bakr al-Darbandi, apparently, considered the text of “Sharh al-Shihab”, composed in the spirit of the traditional hadith school, not quite meeting the spiritual needs of his time. The numerous messages and quotations could, according to al-Darbandi, distract from the main purpose of the work – to give a clear explanation of the meaning of hadiths. This prompted al-Darbandi to shorten the text and shift its essence in his redaction, which resulted in a separate work entitled “A gift to friends in the form of a commentary on al-Shihab” (“Tuhfat al-Ashab fi Sharh al-Shihab”).

Until now, little has been known about this work. In medieval sources, it is only mentioned in the message of the Maghreb writer and biographer Ibn ‘Abd al-Malik al-Marakishi (d. 703/1303), who reports that his countryman Maimun b. Yasin al-Lamtuni studied with “Muhammad b. Musa b. al-Faraj al-Darbandi and received from him a written copy (*munawala*) of ‘Tuhfat al-ashab fi sharh al-Shihab’, the author of which he was (*min jam‘ihi*)” [21, vol. 5, p. 319].

Nevertheless, this work has survived to this day. The same “Catalog of the Arab-Islamic heritage of manuscripts” reports the existence of at least two lists of this work: one of them, dating to the 12th century AH/17-18th centuries, is kept in the library of Princeton University, the other, copied in 1359 AH/1940 – in the Egyptian National Library and Archives [18, vol. 1, p. 993]. Unfortunately, these lists were inaccessible.

Much more successful was the search for the work in private collections in Dagestan. Thus, in the library, which belonged to a prominent Dagestan scholar from the village of Sogratl

Shafi' al-Suguri (d. 1251/1835-36), there is a rather old collected manuscript, which contains this work (Fig. 5)<sup>7</sup>. It is written on 147 sheets of yellow glossy paper of local production in Dagestan *naskh*. The colophon reports that the copying of “this book was completed on the night of Sunday, 15th of the blessed month of Allah Rabi' al-Ahir in 1036 of the Hijrah of the chosen Prophet. The copyist is Muhammad, the son of Suleiman...”. According to the Gregorian calendar, the completion of the copying falls on January 2, 1627. Next to the colophon is an interesting note, which, judging by the handwriting, belongs to another person (Fig. 6): “From the books of Dugri Muhammad, donated as *waqf*, under the names: “Ma' al-Hiqma” and “Tuhfat al-Ashab fi Sharh al-Shihab”, [the last of which] belongs to the scholar, from whose descendants the family of Ali al-Suguri descends<sup>8</sup>, may Allah have mercy on him.” At the beginning of the manuscript, on page 2a, there is also the owner's entry: “From the books of Dugri Muhammad bequeathed for the *waqf*.” Then follows another entry in red ink: “The book has passed into the use (*navba*) of a poor man, *hajji* Shafi' al-Suguri, may Allah have mercy on him.” In the margins and between the lines, the text of the work is accompanied by short comments in the Arabic and Avar (*'ajam*) languages.

The preface begins with the words of Abu Bakr Muhammad b. Musa al-Faraj al-Darbandi that when he saw how a learned *fakih* and energetic imam was explaining the meanings of the “obscure” (*gharib*) hadiths from the book “Al-Shihab” in a concise and comprehensive manner, he decided to convey his explanations in even more reduced form. Al-Darbandi does not specify which *faqih* he mentions, but it is obvious that he is talking about his teacher Abu al-Qasim al-Warraq. Al-Darbandi then proceeds to the main text, in which he summarizes his teacher's comments very briefly. The work is divided into 17 chapters. This list will be marked with the Roman numeral I.

Comparison of this manuscript with the lists of “Sharkh al-Shihab” helped to establish an important fact – the list of “Sharkh al-Shihab”, stored under No. 53 (b) in OMC of the IHAE RAS in Makhachkala and considered by domestic orientalists to be the only known copy of al-Warraq's work to date, is actually the work of Abu Bakr al-Darbandi “Tuhfat al-Ashab fi Sharh al-Shihab”.

This manuscript (Fig. 7) is of Dagestan origin and is written in small cursive *naskh*. The text of this list counts 96 sheets. A. Alikberov already provided a detailed paleographic analysis of this manuscript [1, pp. 298-299]. The colophon (Fig. 8) reports that the copying “was completed on Monday 14 of Rajab by ‘Umar al-Ka’i (القاعي)<sup>9</sup>, the son of Dawud, the son of Suleiman, may Allah forgive them and all Muslims, in 804 from the Hijri of the Messenger (peace be upon him). And this is the two hundred and tenth book out of the number of books that I have copied.” According to the Gregorian calendar, the completion of the copying falls on February 17, 1402. This work is also divided into 17 chapters. This list will be marked with the Roman numeral II.

The reason to believe that this manuscript is “Sharkh al-Shihab” by al-Warraq is that the preface of the work reads: “This is the book ‘Sharh al-Shihab’ <...> said the sheikh, Imam Abu al-Qasim b. Ibrahim al-Warraq, may Allah have mercy on him: praise be to Allah for

7. The manuscript is kept in the private collection of Abdurazakov Magomed in Makhachkala.

8. Most likely, Aliriza al-Suguri (d. 1088/1677-8) - prominent Dagestani scholar and theologian, a calligrapher from the village of Sogratl. In his native village he founded a madrasah, which became very famous in Dagestan.

9. Most likely, the village of Kaya, now in the Kulinsky district of the RD.

His obvious benefits and blessings to Muhammad, his family and his most pure relatives.” All other lists of “Sharh al-Shihab” do, in fact, begin with these lines, and the authorship, as can be seen, is attributed to al-Warraq. But both al-Warraq’s preface and al-Darbandi’s introduction are missing from this list. Despite the fact that the text of the manuscript differs significantly from the text of “Tuhfat al-Ashab” in places, and actively borrows material from “Sharh al-Shihab”, in its content and structure, however, this work is certainly one of the editions of “Tuhfat al-Ashab”, and not “Sharh al-Shihab”.

If the author of “Sharh al-Shihab”, when commenting on a hadith, mainly tried to cite similar hadiths, taking the opportunity to cite his own traditions from the sheikhs, and also went into complex lexical analysis, which often left the commented hadith without proper explanation, then the author of “Tuhfat al-Ashab” was brief and concise in his explanations of hadiths. As a result, his work turned not into a simple summary of his teacher’s comments, but into a separate work, which primarily set out his personal interpretation of hadiths.

This, in turn, sometimes led to a contradiction of the opinions of the teacher and the student, expressed, for example, in the following. Commenting on the hadith (A/L. 56b) “There is no Mahdi except ‘Isa, the son of Maryam”, al-Warraq is sharply indignant at al-Quda’i, who included in his book a hadith that is not mentioned anywhere else (*fard*), which indicates the potential unreliability of the hadith. At the same time, al-Warraq notes that there are numerous other authentic hadiths that report in detail about the identity of Imam Mahdi and indicate that he is not ‘Isa. However, al-Darbandi (I/L. 102a–102b) disagrees with this argument. In his opinion, this hadith does not at all deny the existence of a certain Mahdi in the future, but only calls ‘Isa “properly guided” (“*mahdi*” in Arabic: “guided one”) because of his special distinctive qualities and merits, which even Imam Mahdi will not possess. Al-Darbandi considers the hadith genuine and refuses to call al-Quda’i transmitting “obscure” (*fard, gharib*) hadiths from his sheikhs. At the same time, al-Darbandi, with reference to his sheikhs, still notes that al-Quda’i was not a *muhaddis*, but a *faqih*, so his collection included hadiths whose *isnads* he had not heard.

The book “Tuhfat al-Ashab” also contains some new information about its author. Thus, al-Darbandi mentions his sheikhs, from whom he studied at different times. Some of them are prominent major theologians, whom he often mentions in “Rayhan al-Haqa’iq”. For example, in Baghdad, al-Darbandi listened to hadiths from the Shafi’i *faqih* and *muhaddis* Ibn Marzuk al-Za’farani (d. 517/1123). There he also listened to hadiths from Sheikh Abu al-Hasan al-Faqih, by whom is clearly meant his closest mentor and imam of the cathedral mosque Bab al-Abwab Abu al-Hasan ‘Ali b. Muhammad al-Basri (d. at the end of the 11th century). Another theologian, Abu al-Fadla al-Maqdisi, he calls his sheikh. This sheikh is the famous Zahiri *faqih*, *muhaddis* and a *Malamatiyah* Sufi from Jerusalem, Ibn Tahir al-Kaysarani (d. 507/1113). Al-Darbandi transmits his messages in “Rayhan al-Haqa’iq” and names Hamadan as one of the places where he listened to hadiths from him (OMC of IHAE RAS. F. 14. File 2191. Inv. 1. L. 3b). Al-Zahabi reports that Ibn Tahir lived for some time in Hamadan, where he built house for himself [22, vol. 14, p. 290]. Being a guest at his house, al-Darbandi most likely became familiar with the teachings of *Malamatiyah*.

Others, such as a certain Qadi al-Makhzumi, whom he met in Mecca, and the jurist and sheikh Abu ‘Ali al-Dili al-Faqih, remain unidentified as yet.

Al-Darbandi's mentions of his other writings are also noteworthy. Foremost, al-Darbandi repeatedly refers to his work "Sharh al-Albab" (شرح الألباب), which, according to him, is the book of "Sharh al-Kabir". These are two titles of the same work. Proceeding from indirect data, the book is an expanded interpretation of the hadith, perhaps of the "Shihab al-Akhbar" itself. The author often notes that he has given a comprehensive explanation of one or another of the discussed hadith in this book.

One more work of the author is "Al-Siraj" (السراج), along with his own commentary "Al-Minhaj fi Sharh al-Siraj" (المنهاج في شرح السراج). According to al-Darbandi, these works are also commentaries on hadith. At the same time, it is possible that al-Darbandi wrote the commentary "Al-Minhaj" almost simultaneously with "Tuhfat al-Ashab". For instance, in the middle of "Tuhfat al-Ashab" the author writes about one of the hadiths: "I have already given this message in a book called 'Al-Siraj', and for the sake of Allah Almighty's satisfaction, I will comment on it in Al-Minhaj" (I/L. 97a); and towards the end of the work, discussing another hadith, he reports: "I have given a full explanation of this hadith in the book under the name 'Al-Minhaj fi Sharh al-Siraj'" (I/L. 117b).

Al-Darbandi refers to his famous book "Rayhan al-Haqa'iq" only once (I/L. 71a; II/ L. 94a), which gives us the opportunity to roughly date the time of the writing of "Tuhfat al-Askhab". A. Alikberov approximately dates the completion of "Rayhan al-Haqa'iq" to 500 AH/1106-07 [1, p. 330]. Therefore, "Tuhfat al-Askhab" was written in the second or third decade of the 12th century.

The date of death of Abu Bakr al-Darbandi, established by A. Alikberov, seems questionable. He refers to the fact that the Islamic biographical literature mentions a certain Abu Bakr Muhammad b. 'Ashir b. Ma'ruf al-Darbandi al-Shirvani, whose death date is given by Ibn al-Subki: Shawwal 539/7 April – 5 May 1145. Some similarities in the biographies of Abu Bakr al-Darbandi and Abu Bakr al-Shirvani gave reason to A. Alikberov to suggest that this is the same person, and that Ibn al-Sam'ani made a mistake when writing his name [1, pp. 290-292]. However, we disagree with his deduction for the following reasons. Firstly, the version that the professional biographer Ibn al-Sam'ani made three mistakes in the name of the person he met personally and recorded hadiths from seems unconvincing. Secondly, the same Ibn 'Abd al-Malik al-Marakishi, who, incidentally, was also a professional biographer, in the same book in which he mentions Abu Bakr al-Darbandi, mentions Abu Bakr Muhammad b. 'Ashir b. Ma'ruf al-Shirvani [21, vol. 3, p. 234]. Thirdly, we do not find any mention in the book "Rayhan al-Haqa'iq" of sheikhs, whom biographers call the teachers of Abu Bakr al-Shirvani. Thus, the Andalusian poet and *muhaddis* Abu 'Abdullah al-Wadi-Ashi (d. 749/1338) reports that Abu Bakr al-Shirvani received an *ijaza* for teaching according to the book "Muzajat al-Nabi" from Abu Bakr Muhammad b. Batarkhan b. Baltakin, better known as Abu Bakr al-Turki (d. 513/1119) [23, p. 268]. Other sheikhs of Abu Bakr al-Shirvani such as Abu al-Khair al-Mubarak b. al-Husayn al-Ghassal (d. 510/1116) and Hibatullah b. al-Mubarak al-Sakati (d. 509/1115) are also not mentioned.

All these points indicate that Abu Bakr al-Darbandi and Abu Bakr al-Shirvani are still two different individuals, which leaves open the question of dating the death of Abu Bakr al-Darbandi.

## Conclusion

By the 11th century, due to the evolution of Islamic religious and philosophical thought in the major religious centers of the caliphate, to which Bab al-Abwab undoubtedly belonged, traditional collections of hadiths ceased to sufficiently meet the spiritual needs of Muslim society. There was a need for the corpora in a new format, in which the moral and ethical sayings and instructions in the form of hadiths of the Prophet Muhammad would satisfy the needs of Muslims. One of the first to fulfill this task was the Egyptian Qadi Abu ‘Abdullah al-Quda’i – a representative, oddly enough, not of Sufi circles, but of preachers (*vu’az*). By the end of the 11<sup>th</sup> century, al-Quda’i’s work gained wide popularity throughout the Muslim world, including in Bab al-Abwab. Abu al-Qasim al-Warraq, as well as other *muhaddis* who made commentaries on the work “Shihab al-Akhbar” removed many of the 1200 hadiths included by al-Quda’i in their collection, which clearly made them unreliable. Nevertheless, al-Warraq still preserved in his work a considerable number of hadiths that did not meet the strict criteria of hadith studies, which reached its peak at that time. It can be explained by al-Warraq’s understanding of the society’s need for hadiths of moral, ethical and didactic content. This prompted him to soften the requirements for hadiths, if they did not directly contradict the fundamental issues of faith or more reliable hadiths.

At the beginning of the 12th century, noticeable changes were taking place in Muslim society, associated with a sharp convergence of Sufism with normative Islam. During these processes, Abu Bakr al-Darbandi decided to write his commentary on the work “Shihab al-Akhbar”, taking as a basis the commentary of his teacher. Al-Darbandi’s decision was dictated, on the one hand, by him becoming a major independent scholar, whose students needed his personal interpretations of certain religious issues; on the other hand, by the understanding that changes in social and religious life, the most noticeable of which was the strengthening of the role and expansion of Sufi communities, required updating the written material that served as a source of meeting spiritual needs of society.

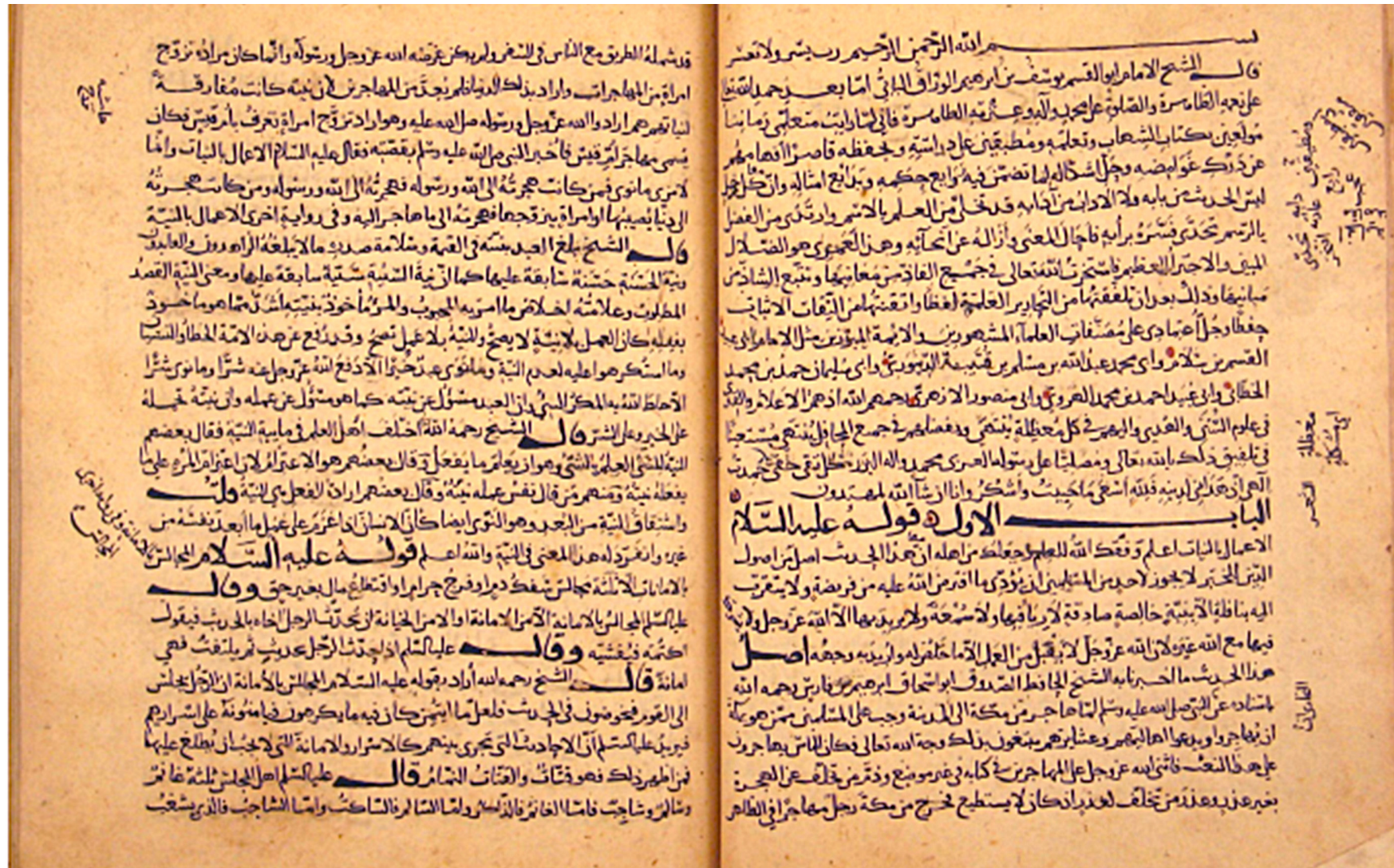


Fig. 1. Photocopy of a List A

Рис. 1. Фотокопия списка А

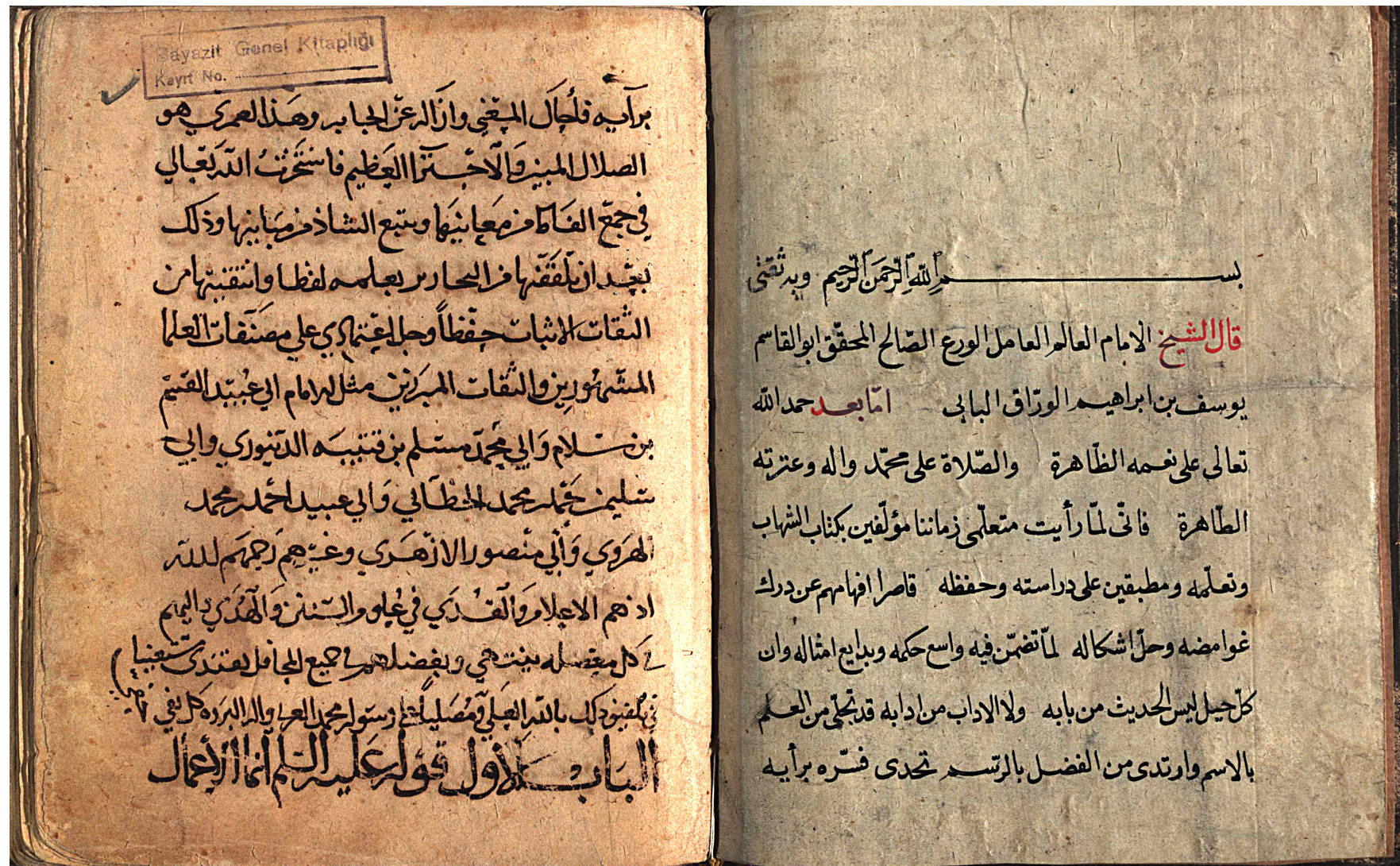


Fig. 2. Photocopy of a List B

Рис. 2. Фотокопия списка Б



لسم الله الرحمن الرحيم وحلى الله على سيدنا محمد وآله وسلم تسليماً  
 قال أبو القاسم بن اسحق أبو هبيرة العوفي البجلي رحمه الله  
 أما بعد حمد الله على نعمه النظامه هراً وظلواته على محمد وآله  
 وعترته الطاهرة جانيه لها رابت معلني زماننا مولعني بكتاب  
 الشعاب وتعلمه ومطيفني على دراسته وتخطئه فلا صد كما  
 اجعلهم عن ذك عوامهم وحل اشغالهم لما تضمن فيه  
 من رابع حكمه وبتابع امثاله وان كان خيال ليس الحديث من ربه  
 والاداب من دابة فدغلي من العلم بالاسم وارقتي من العجل بل  
 لرسم تحداً ييسر برابه جلال العنى وانزاله عن افخايب  
 وهذه العمدة وهو الضلال المميز والاحتر العظيم بل سخرت  
 الله العظيم جميع الجاهل من معانيها وتبجح الشك من  
 مبدئيه وذلك بعد ان تافيتنا من الخمار برالعلمة اجطلا  
 وانتفيتها من الثقافات الاثبات جعلنا وجعل اعتماد  
 على محتجات العلماء المشهورين والثقافات المبرزين مثل  
 الامام ابي عبيد القاسم بن سلام وابي محمد مسلم بن  
 فتية الدينوري وابي سليمان احمد بن الخطابي وابي  
 عبيد احمد بن محمد الطروي وابي منصور الازهر بن حنبل  
 الله اذ هم العلماء والقدما في علم السنن والهدى واليهم

Fig. 3. Photocopy of a List C

Рис. 3. Фотокопия списка В

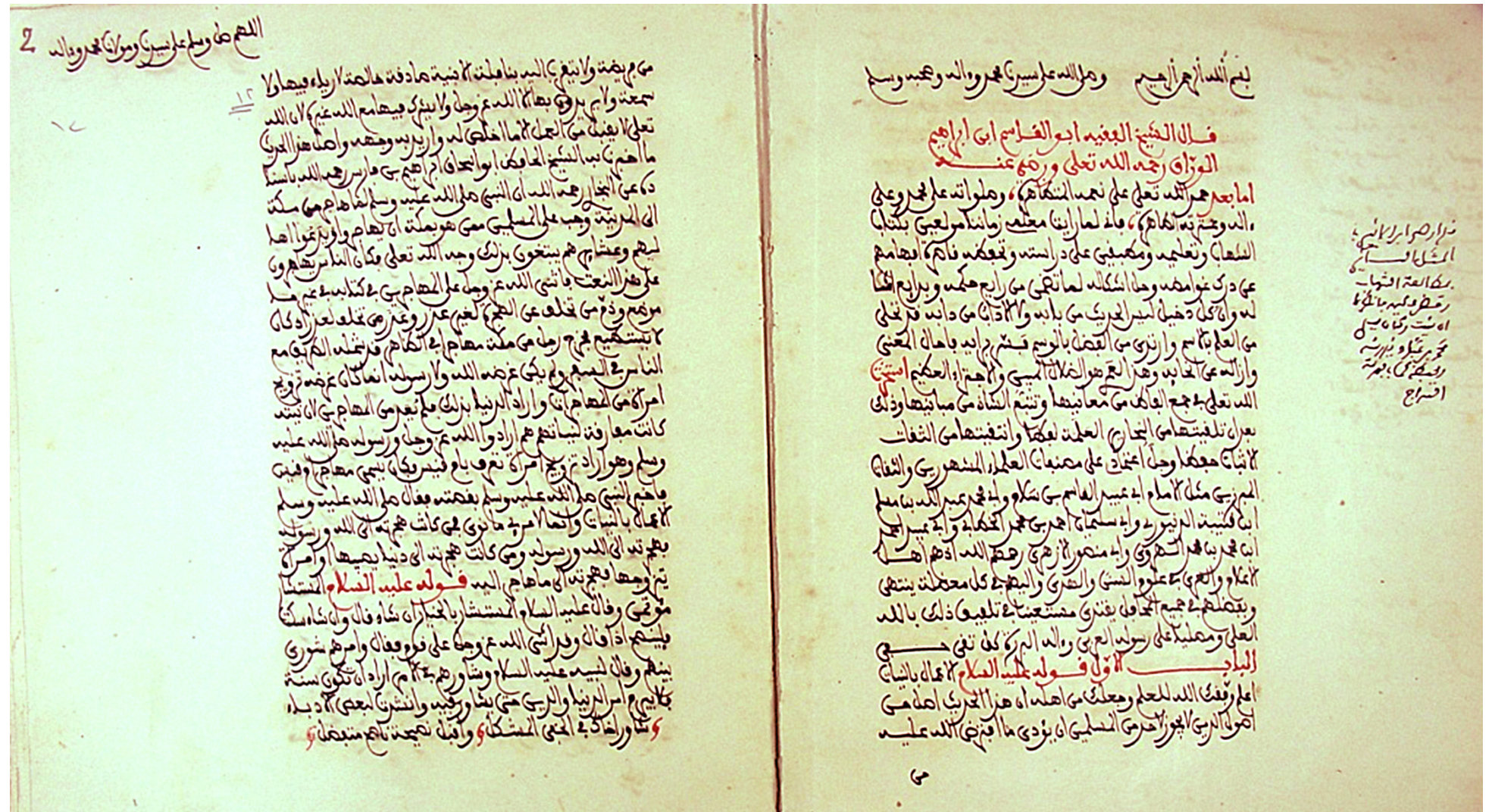


Fig. 4. Photocopy of a List D

Рис. 4. Фотокопия списка Г

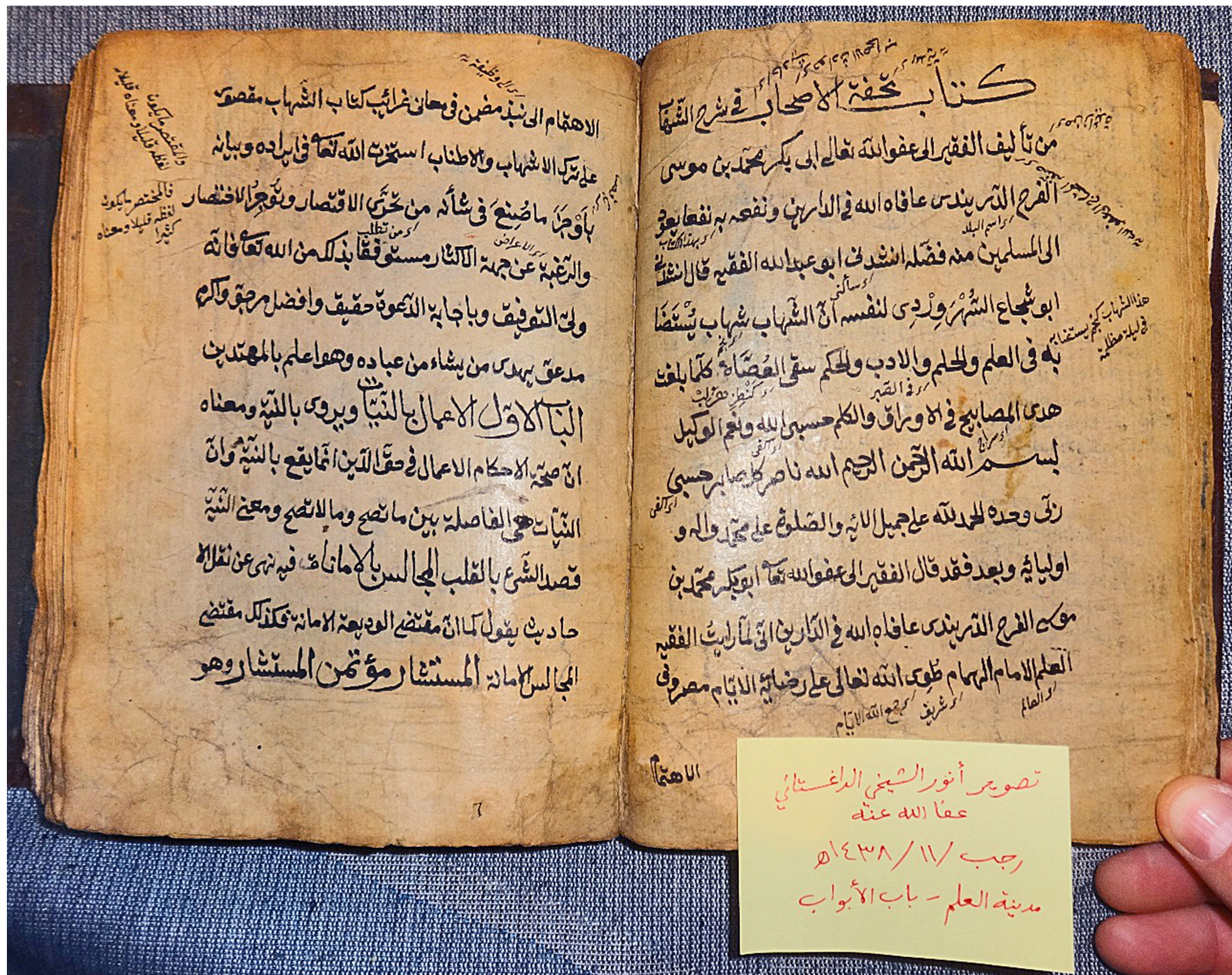


Fig. 5. Photocopy of a List I

Рис. 5. Фотокопия списка I





Fig. 7. Photocopy of a List II

Рис. 7. Фотокопия списка II



Fig. 8. Photocopy of the last page of the List II

Рис. 8. Фотокопия последней страницы списка II

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