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**COPIES OF THE MANUSCRIPT *AṬWĀQ AL-DAḤAB AL-ZAMAḤṢARĪ* FROM THE COLLECTIONS OF THE INSTITUTE OF ORIENTAL MANUSCRIPTS OF THE RUSSIAN ACADEMY OF SCIENCES AND THE ORIENTAL DEPARTMENT OF GORKY RESEARCH LIBRARY OF ST. PETERSBURG STATE UNIVERSITY**

Saint Petersburg State University, 7–9, Universitetskaya nab., St. Petersburg, 199034, Russian Federation

This paper presents a study of oriental manuscripts. The study focuses on the life of famous scholar al-Zamaḥṣarī and one of his most important writings, *Aṭwāq al-daḥab*, or *Golden Necklaces of Exhortations and Sermons*.

Al-Zamaḥṣarī's work is analyzed from the point of view of style and grammar. Three different copies of the manuscript are compared, two of which come from the collection of the Oriental Department of Gorky Research Library of St Petersburg State University and one from the collection of the Institute of Oriental Manuscripts of the Russian Academy of Sciences. Refs 8. Figs 12.

*Keywords:* codicology, Arabic manuscript, manuscript copies, Arabic language, didactic literature.

**СПИСКИ РУКОПИСИ АЛ-ЗАМАХШАРИ “*AṬWĀQ AL-DAḤAB*”, ПРИНАДЛЕЖАЩИЕ КОЛЛЕКЦИИ ИНСТИТУТА ВОСТОЧНЫХ РУКОПИСЕЙ И СОБРАНИЮ ВОСТОЧНОГО ОТДЕЛА БИБЛИОТЕКИ ИМ. М. ГОРЬКОГО СПбГУ**

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Статья посвящена ставшему в последнее время чрезвычайно актуальным вопросу изучения и описания восточных рукописей. В настоящем исследовании собраны факты из жизни известного ученого ал-Замахшари, а также рассматривается одно из самых важных сочинений автора, которое носит название *Aṭwāq al-daḥab*, или *Золотые ожерелья наставлений и советов*. В этом произведении ал-Замахшари описал положительные и отрицательные стороны общества в целом и отдельных его представителей в частности. Значимость произведения ал-Замахшари подтверждается тем, что впоследствии появилось несколько работ-подражаний его сочинению.

Авторы статьи проводят анализ содержания сочинения ал-Замахшари, выделяя стилистические и грамматические особенности текста, а также сопоставив тексты разных списков одной рукописи. Кроме того, в статье представлены наиболее интересные фрагменты сочинения, позволяющие составить впечатление о произведении ал-Замахшари в целом. В своей работе авторы рассматривают и описывают три списка сочинения ал-Замахшари *Aṭwāq al-daḥab*: два списка из Восточного отдела библиотеки им. Горького СПбГУ, а также список из Института восточных рукописей Санкт-Петербурга. Иллюстрации соответствующих листов сочинения дают более полное представление об особенностях изученных списков. Библиогр. 8 назв. Ил. 12.

*Ключевые слова:* кодикология, арабская рукопись, списки рукописи, арабский язык, дидактическая литература.

Currently, research of written artifacts in oriental languages is increasingly timely and important. This has to do with the fact that scholars recognized the importance of knowledge contained in centuries old treatises on philosophy, history, philology, medicine and other human and natural sciences. Over the centuries, the number of written pieces

has experienced a steady increase filling private and public collections. The spread of writings prompts their proper storage and systematization.

Russian scholars had already studied al-Zamaḥṣarī's writings, e.g. B. Z. Khalidov, *Al-Zamaḥṣarī (zhizn i tvorchestvo) (Al-Zamaḥṣarī: His Life and Writings)* and B. Z. Khalidov & A. B. Khalidov, *Biografia al-Zamaḥṣarī, sostavlenneya ego sovremennikom al-'Andarasbānī (Al-Zamaḥṣarī's Biography Compiled by His Contemporary al-'Andarasbānī)*. This study will go beyond the famous scholar's personality and also focus on one of his most important pieces, *Aṭwāq al-ḡahab*, or *Golden Necklaces of Exhortations and Sermons*.

Maḥmūd al-Zamaḥṣarī was the author of seventy works. He was born in 467 AH/1075 AD. and died in 538AH/1144 AD. The future scholar was born in a small place called Zamakhshar in Khwarezmia, which is now part of Turkmenistan, and grew in a poor but educated and religious family [1, p.210]. 'Abd al-Tawāb 'Auḍ mentions these facts attributing them to al-Zamaḥṣarī himself [2, p. 10]. Adventurer and scholar al-Muqaddasī noted that Khwarezm attracted a lot of scholars and literary figures of the time [3, p. 284–285]. Initially, al-Zamaḥṣarī's father taught him. Later, he went to school and traveled a lot when he grew up to increase his knowledge. Yaqūt al-Ḥamawī mentions 'Abū al-Ḥasan al-Muẓaffar al-Nisābūrī and 'Ibn Ḡarīr al-Ḍabbī — among al-Zamaḥṣarī's teachers. The latter not only taught al-Zamaḥṣarī but supported him financially. Later, al-Zamaḥṣarī had a lot of disciples too [4, p. 1142].

Al-Zamaḥṣarī traveled to Bukhara, Khorasan, Isfahan, Baghdad, and Mecca, where he met outstanding people of his time. Some researchers noted that al-Zamaḥṣarī continued to study all his life. His good handwriting helped the young scholar to make his living.

Al-Zamaḥṣarī was married but had no children. He divorced his wife to dedicate his life to scholarly activities. 'Abd al-Tawāb 'Auḍ says that the failure in his personal life made a great impact on his beliefs [2, p. 31]. He even made this the subject of some of his beits:

tazawwaḡtu lam 'a'lam wa 'aḥṭa'tu lam 'uṣīb  
fa yā laytanī qad muttu qabla al-tazwiḡ

*I married, not knowing what marriage was.*

*I wish I could have died before the wedding!*

The scholar had two nicknames: Faḥr Ḥawārizm *the Pride of Khwarezm* and Ḡār Allāh *God's Neighbor*. Arab scholar and writer al-Ziriklī suggested that the latter name was given to al-Zamaḥṣarī, because he lived in Mecca for quite some time [5, p. 76-77].

Al-Zamaḥṣarī had a physical impairment that he received as a child, he had lost his foot and used a wooden artificial leg. Several explanations are known of this impairment. Some historians believe that he lost one of his feet to a frostbite. B. Z. Khalidov points out that al-Zamaḥṣarī's disability was the result of him falling off the roof and breaking his leg, which had to be amputated [6, p. 548]. However, Yaqūt al-Ḥamawī referred to an explanation allegedly given to him by al-Zamaḥṣarī himself that stated that the disability was his mother's curse who saw al-Zamaḥṣarī's cruel treatment of the bird he had caught and wished that he would suffer the same. According to contemporaries al-Zamaḥṣarī always carried a document as legal proof of his impairment [4, p. 2688].

As a young man, al-Zamaḥṣarī wrote several works that brought him fame. He sent his scholarly pieces and praising poems to various rulers including high-ranked officials with the court of Seljuq Sultans, to receive remuneration and a government position.

While he received money for his writings he never reached a high position protesting that the road to power was open to the ignorant but closed to scholars.

Al-Zamaḥṣarī was the author of geographic and Arabic-Persian dictionaries, a collection of maqamas, a collection of proverbs and sayings as well as numerous theological writings. Al-Zamaḥṣarī's Qur'an commentary, *al-Kaššāf fī al-Qurān*, which he completed in 1134, is the most debated of his works. Al-Zamaḥṣarī followed the Hanafi Madhab and subscribed to the Mu'tazilite theological doctrine. This work fully reflected his ideas. Despite the fact that *al-Kaššāf* has often been called heretical, it remains one of the most serious scholarly works of this kind as the first example of scholarly textual analysis.

'Ibn Ḥallikān and al-Suyūṭī noted al-Zamaḥṣarī's breadth of knowledge and talked of him as a specialist in many fields.

In 1130, the scholar went on his second hajj to Mecca despite his physical disability going around Kaaba one hundred times [7, p. 66]. According to contemporaries, after each circle al-Zamaḥṣarī writes a chapter or, as he called them, *maqāla* (article) of his piece *Aṭwāq al-ḍahab*. The work was written in the traditional Arab style of *sağ'* (rhymed prose). We should remind our readers of al-Zamaḥṣarī's mastery of Arabic. His works are characterized by high style, imagery and rich language. *Aṭwāq al-ḍahab* is written in the style not accessible to every scholar. This is another evidence of his command of the language. In *Aṭwāq al-ḍahab*, the author describes positive and negative aspects of society as a whole and of some of its members.

Al-Zamaḥṣarī died in his home town of Khwarezm and was buried in Gurganj. Famous traveler 'Ibn Baṭṭūṭa wrote that he had visited that place and personally seen the scholar's grave.

How important was al-Zamaḥṣarī's *Aṭwāq al-ḍahab* is manifested by the fact that a number of pieces have since come out that imitated this work. Al-'Iṣfahānī wrote a piece with the similar name of *Aṭbāq al-ḍahab* (*Golden Dishes*). The piece is written in a similar style on a similar subject. It also describes public morals but is longer than al-Zamaḥṣarī's work. Despite the fact that both writings were complete pieces, they complement each other in some parts [7, p. 67]. Famous Egyptian poet 'Aḥmad Ṣawqī wrote a piece in 1951 that had reference points with al-Zamaḥṣarī's work both in content and in form called *Aswāq al-ḍahab* (*Golden Markets*).

We studied three copies of al-Zamaḥṣarī's, *Aṭwāq al-ḍahab*, or *Golden Necklaces of Exhortations and Sermons*: No.834 and No.797 from the Oriental Department of Gorky Research Library of St Petersburg State University and A-584 from the Institute of Oriental Manuscripts in St Petersburg.

First of all, it must be noted that the title of *Aṭwāq al-ḍahab* was not given by the piece's author. Al-Zamaḥṣarī wrote two pieces with similar titles: the collection of maqam, *Kitāb al-naṣā'ih al-kibār* (*The Book of Important Exhortations*) and *Kitāb al-naṣā'ih al-ṣiḡār* (*The Book of Small Exhortations*). Later, the latter became known as *Aṭwāq al-ḍahab*.

Both copies from the collection of the Oriental Department of St Petersburg State University belonged to Sheik al-Ṭaṇṭawī's collection [8, c. 28]. There is an inscription on page 2 in No.834 made by the copy owner:

ṭāla' ḥaḍīhi al-risāla mālikuhā Muḥammad al-Ṭaṇṭawī wa huwa fī bītrbūrġ fī yaum al-sabt 3 ġumādī aḥar sanat 1256

*Its owner Muhammad al-Ṭaṇṭawī read this treatise, St Petersburg, Saturday, 3 Jumadi, end of the year 1256.*

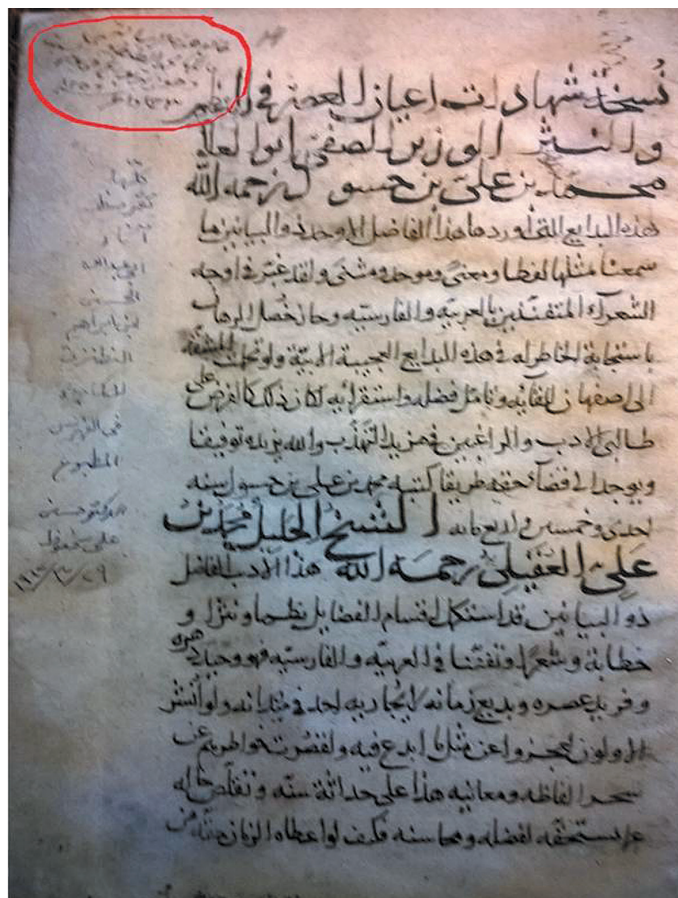


Fig. 1. Fragment of Copy No.834 with the inscription indicating that the copy was part of al-Ṭanṭawī's collection

Copy No.834 (sheets 1–13) is in a convolute; it is in good condition. The copy size is 22 cm × 14 cm. The paper is European, with water marks. The text is written in black ink, with headings highlighted in red ink. There comments on the margins in Arabic. The text includes carry-over words and an introductory basmalah. Neither the date nor the copyist's name are mentioned. Part of the text is vowelled.

The size of Copy No.797 is 21,5 cm × 15 cm. The copy is in good condition despite the yellowed paper. The paper is European, with water marks. The text is written in black ink, with headings highlighted in red ink. The text is inside a box drawn in red ink. Some sheets have comments in Arabic; the text has carry-over words. Neither the date nor the copyist's name are mentioned. The text is fully vowelled.

Copy A-584 from the collection of the Institute of Oriental Manuscripts in St Petersburg has the following size: 17,5 cm × 13 cm. The cover is made of cardboard. The text is written in black ink, with headings highlighted in red ink. There are grammatical and lexical comments in Arabic with corrected mistakes on the margins. The text of the piece starts with the back side of sheet 2. Articles, or chapters, are numbered till sheet 5. The text is fully vowelled.

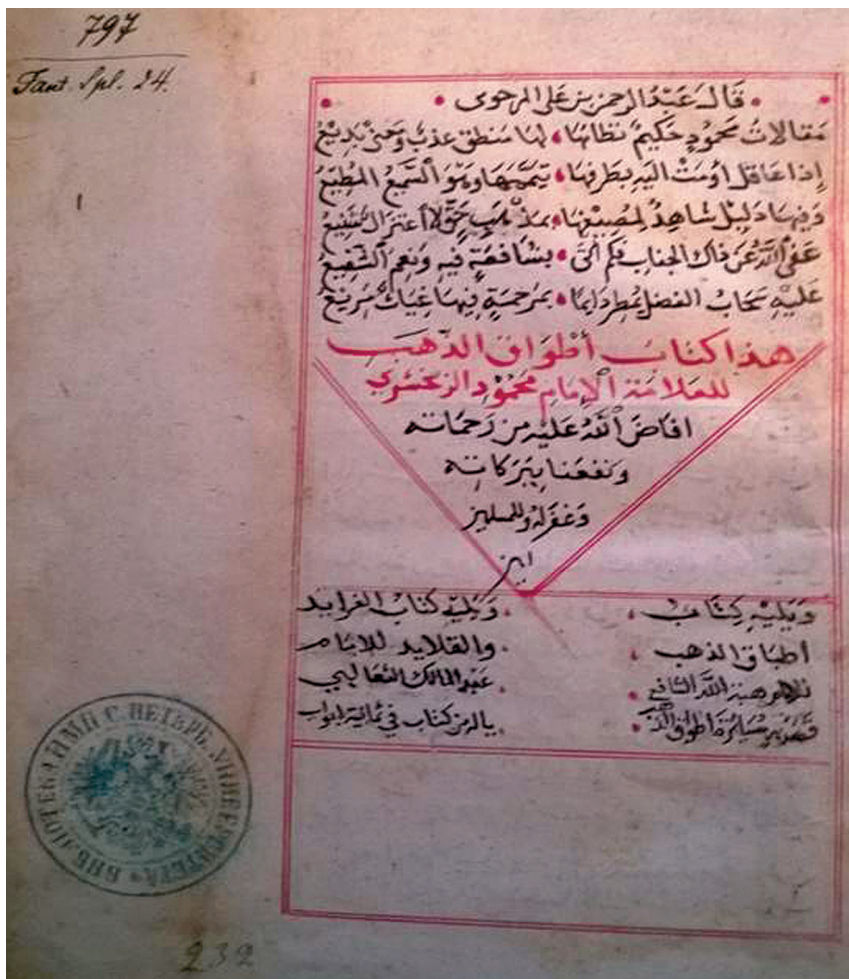


Fig. 2. First Sheet of Copy No.797

The three copies start with the author's words:

allāhumma 'innī 'ahmaduka 'alā mā 'anzalta 'alayya min ni'matika wa 'alā mā 'azalta 'annī min ni'qmatika 'alā 'annī lam 'akun ahlan li-al-'ulā kunt bi-al-tāniya 'awlā

God, I thank you for giving (me) of Your mercies; (for) removing Your wrath from me, although I did not deserve the former (i.e., Your mercy) but deserved the latter (i.e. Your wrath).

The word *'anzalta* is replaced by its synonym *'azlalta* in Copy A-584. Meanwhile the text is rhymed, e.g.: *'anzalta* — *'azalta*; *min ni'matika* — *min niqmatika*.

The back of sheet 2 says:

'innaka mawlā kull ḥayr wa muwlih wa ḥāfiḍ kull šay' wa mu'lih

*You have all goodness, You give goodness. You elevate and bring down.*

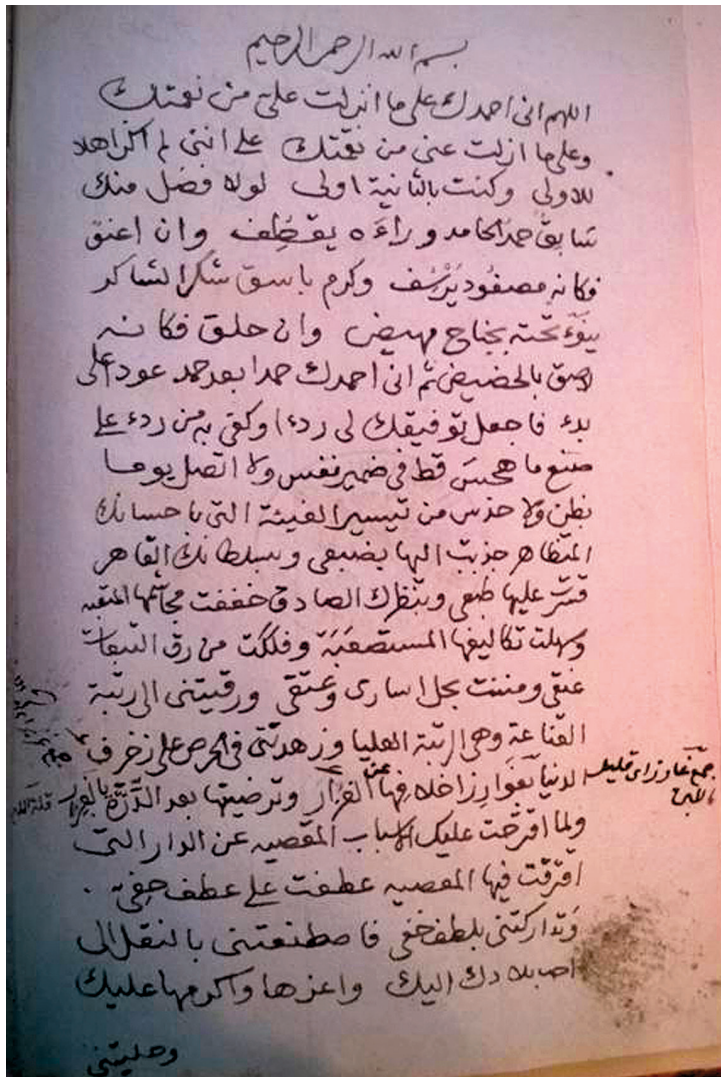


Fig. 3. Beginning of Copy No. 834

Copy No.797 has a colophon on sheet 1, which is generally found at the end of a piece. There is a verse by scholar ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Marḥūmī in the colophon<sup>1</sup>:

maqālāt Maḥmūd ḥakīm nizāmuhā  
lahā maṭṭaq ‘adb wa ma’nā badī  
‘iḍā ‘aqil ‘awmat ‘ilayh bi-ṭarfiḥā  
tayammamhā wa huwa al-samī‘ al-muṭī  
wa lahā dalīl šāhid li-muṣṣiḡihā  
bi-maḡḡhab ḥaqq lā ‘i‘tizāl šanī  
‘afā allāh ‘an ḡāk al-ḡanāb fa-kam ‘atā

<sup>1</sup> Died in 1712.

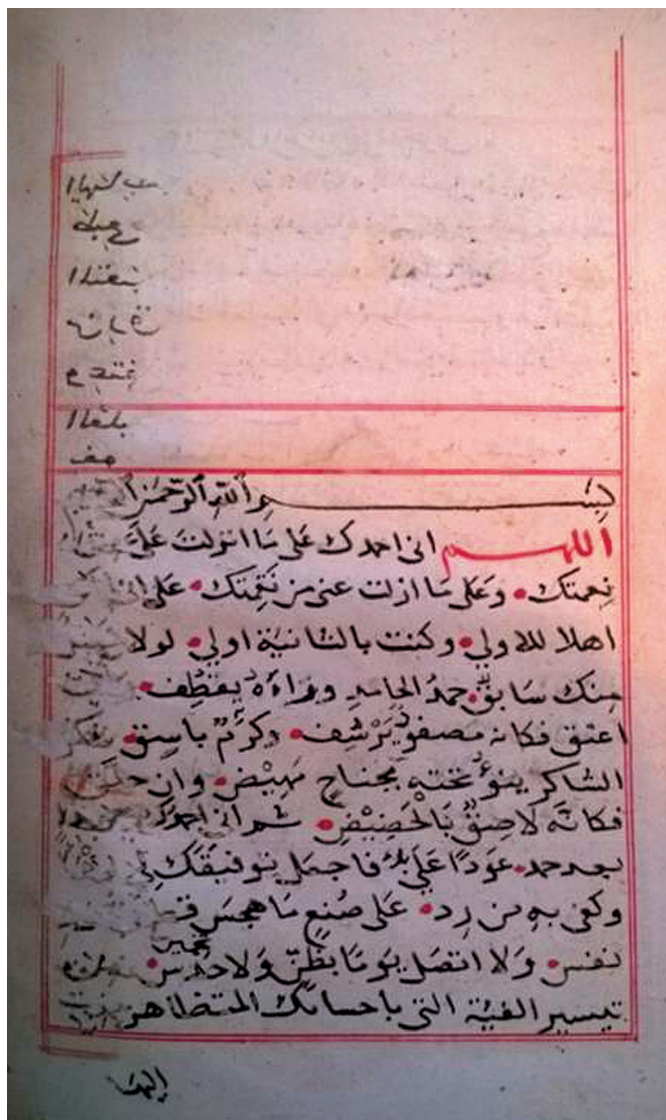


Fig. 4. Beginning of Copy No. 797

bi-šāfi'at fih wa ni'm al-Ḥafi'  
 'alayh saḥāb al-faḍl yamṭar dā'imān  
 bi-marḥmat fihā ḡiyāṭ muri'  
 The rhymes in Mahmud's articles are wonderful,  
 They have sweet language and marvelous meaning.  
 If these articles are given to a reasonable man,  
 He immediately washes himself with sand. He is obedient and humble.<sup>2</sup>  
 These articles have obvious proof that the man, who has written them,

<sup>2</sup> It means "obedient to and humble before" God, since some chapters have religious content.

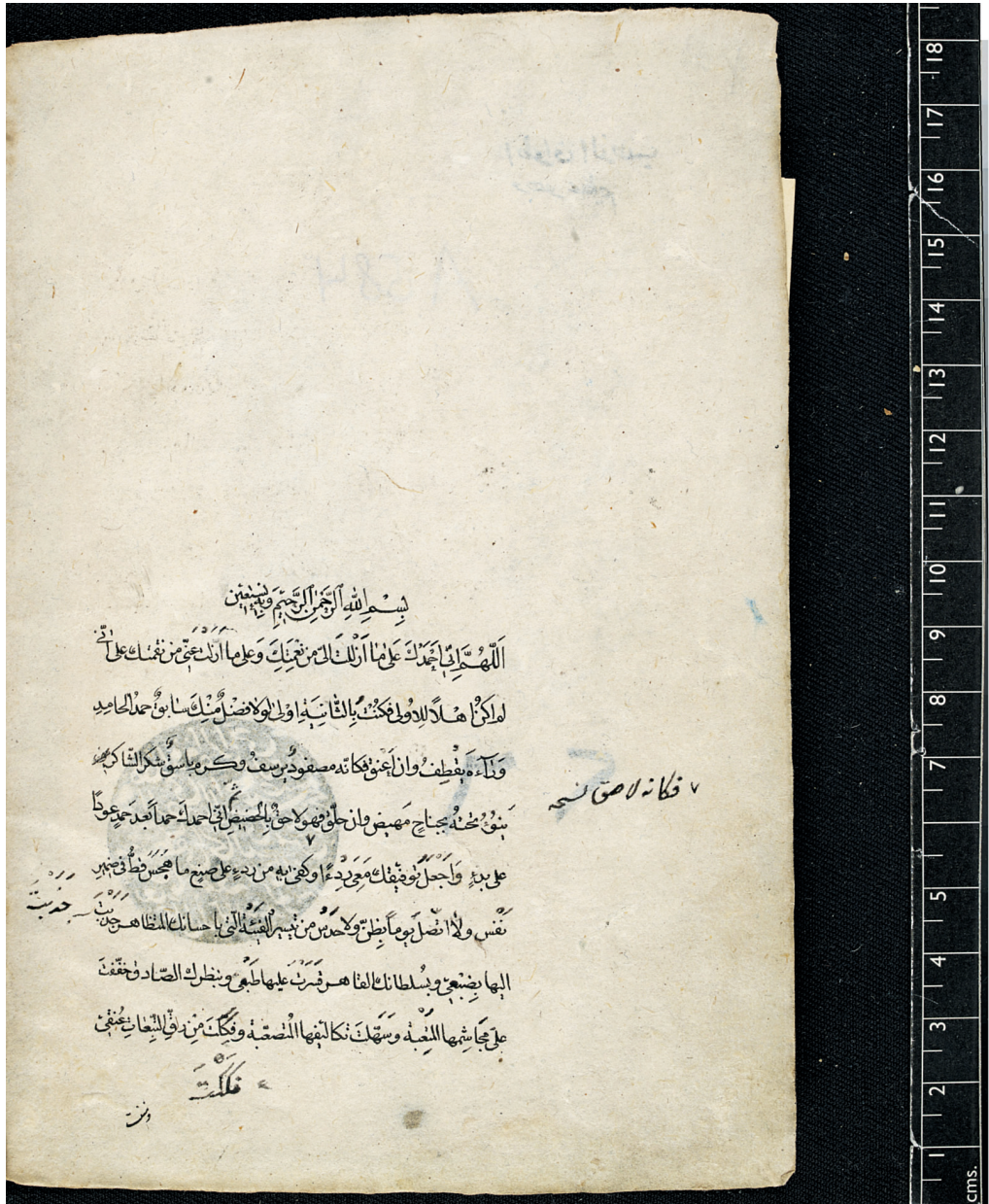


Fig. 5. Beginning of Copy A-584

Adheres to the right religious doctrine,  
 Not to the horrible Mu'tazilite teaching.  
 May God forgive this man. How many times God has protected him!  
 He is the best protector in the world!  
 He<sup>3</sup> is given countless blessings.

<sup>3</sup> Reference to al-Zamahšari



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Fast. 14.

• قَالَ عِنْدَ الرَّحْمَنِ عَلَى الرَّحْمَى •  
 مَقَالَاتٌ مَحْمُودٌ حَكِيمٌ نَظَاهَا • لَهَا مَنَظِقٌ عَذْبٌ وَعَيْنٌ بَدِيعٌ  
 إِذَا عَاقَلَ أَوْتٌ الَّتِي بَطَّرَ فِيهَا • تَمَّهَا وَهِيَ السَّمْعُ الْمَطْبُوعُ  
 وَفِيهَا دَلِيلٌ شَاهِدٌ لِمُصَيَّبَتِهَا • بِمَا مَيَّبَتْ حَوْلَهَا عَتْرَالُ السَّبْعِ  
 عَفَى اللَّهُ عَنْ ذَاكَ الْجَنَابِ فَلَمْ يَأْتِ • بِشَاقِصَةٍ فِيهِ وَنَعَمَ السَّبْعُ  
 عَلَيْهِ سَخَابُ الْفَضْلِ مُطَرِّدًا • بِمَرَجَّةٍ فِيهَا عَيْنٌ سَرِيحٌ

**هذا كتاب أطواق الذهب**  
**للمعلمة الإمام محمود الزمخشري**

افاض الله عليه من رحمته  
 ونفعنا ببركاته  
 وغفر له وللمسلمين

• ويلىه كتاب الفرائد •  
 • والقلائد للايام •  
 • عبد الملك النعالي •  
 • بالمر كتاب في ثمانية ابواب •

• ويلىه كتاب •  
 • اطباق الذهب •  
 • للامير صفة الله الشافعي •  
 • قصيدة مسطرة اطواق الذهب •



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Fig. 6. Sheet 1 of Copy No.797

We can derive from the above fragment that despite many sources some scholars, including al-Marḥūmī, believed that al-Zamaḥṣārī was not Mu'tazilite.

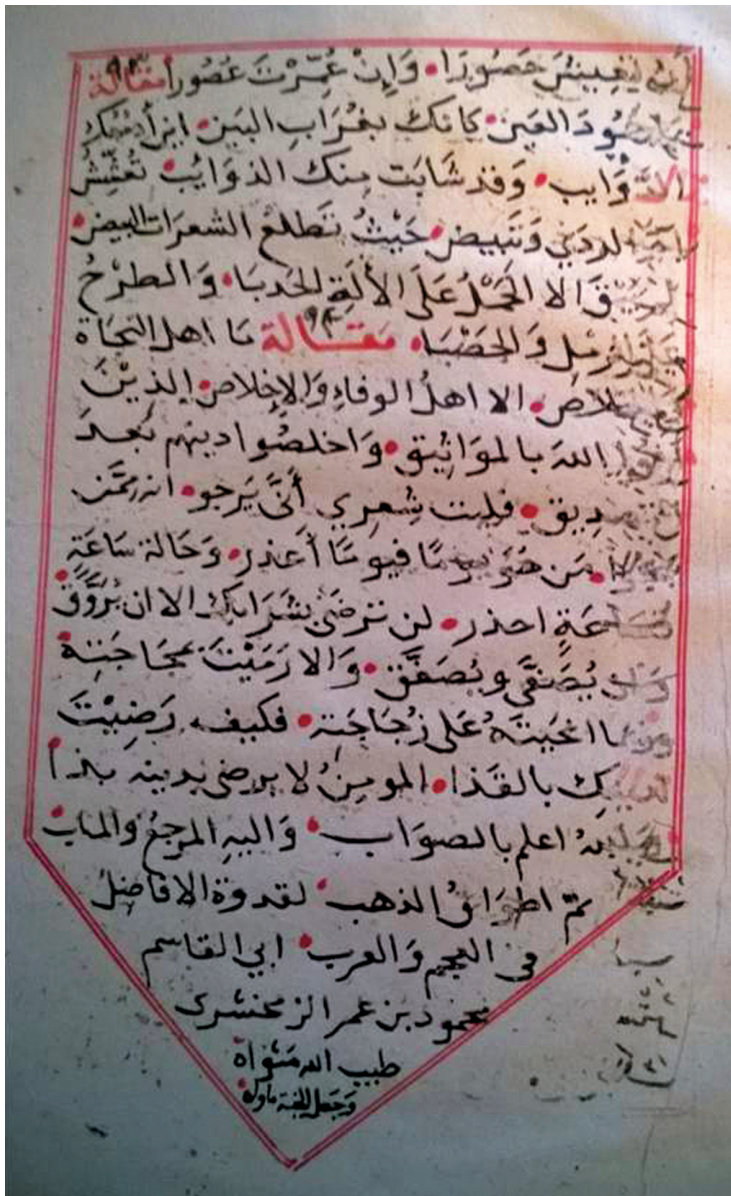


Fig. 7. Fragment of Copy No.797

The colophon on sheet 21 of Copy No.797 reads:

tamma Aṭwāq al-ḡahab li-quḍwat al-ḡaḍil fi al-ḡm wa al-ḡarab  
'Abī al-Qāsim Maḡmūd ibn 'Umar al-Zamaḡṣarī ṭayyab Allāh maṭwāh

*The piece Golden Necklaces is completed to become an example for worthy (people) from Arabs and non-Arabs. (Written by) 'Abī al-Qāsim Maḡmūd ibn 'Umar al-Zamaḡṣarī. May he rest in peace!*

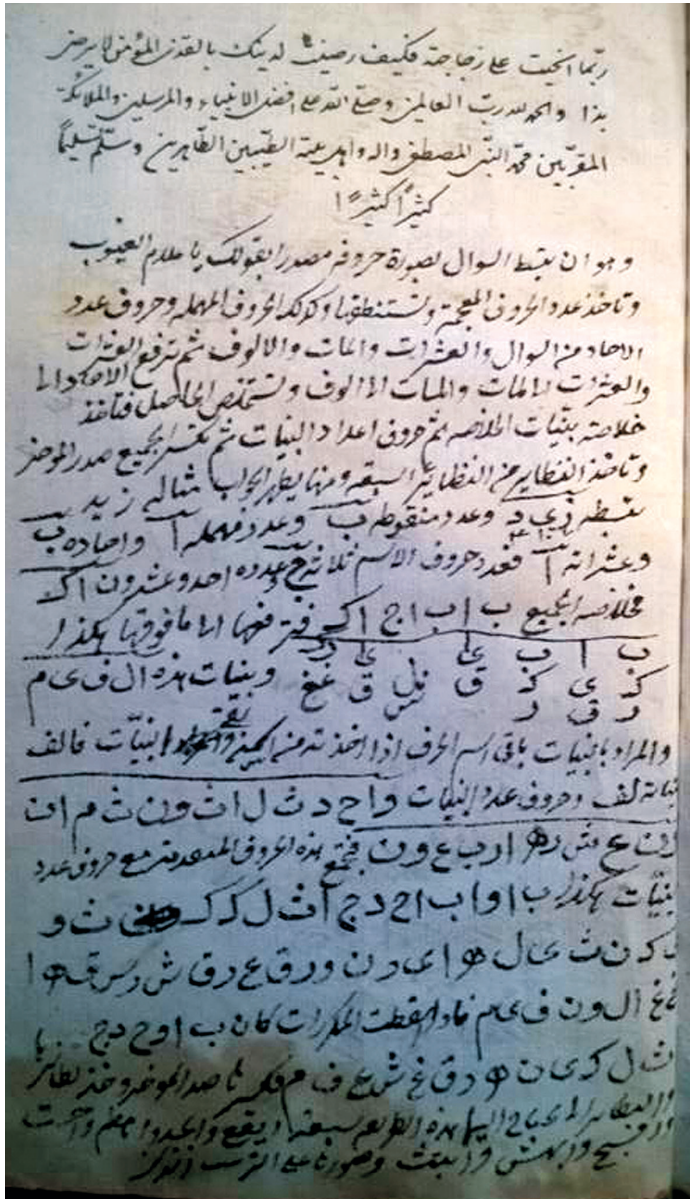


Fig. 8. Last sheet of Copy No. 834

Copy No.834 has the following text on sheet 13:

wa al-ḥamd li-Allāh rabb al-‘ālamīn wa ṣalla Allāh ‘alā ‘afḍal al-‘anbiyā’ wa al-mursilīn  
wa al-malā’ikat al-muqarrabin Muḥammad al-nabī al-muṣṭafā wa ālih wa ‘ahl baytih al-  
ṭayyibīn al-ṭāhirīn wa sallam taslīman kaṭīran kaṭīran

*Praise God, the Lord of the Worlds! May God bless the best of prophets and (God’s)  
messengers, angels close to Muhammad — the chosen prophet — his noble family and kin.  
He (God) blessed him immensely.*

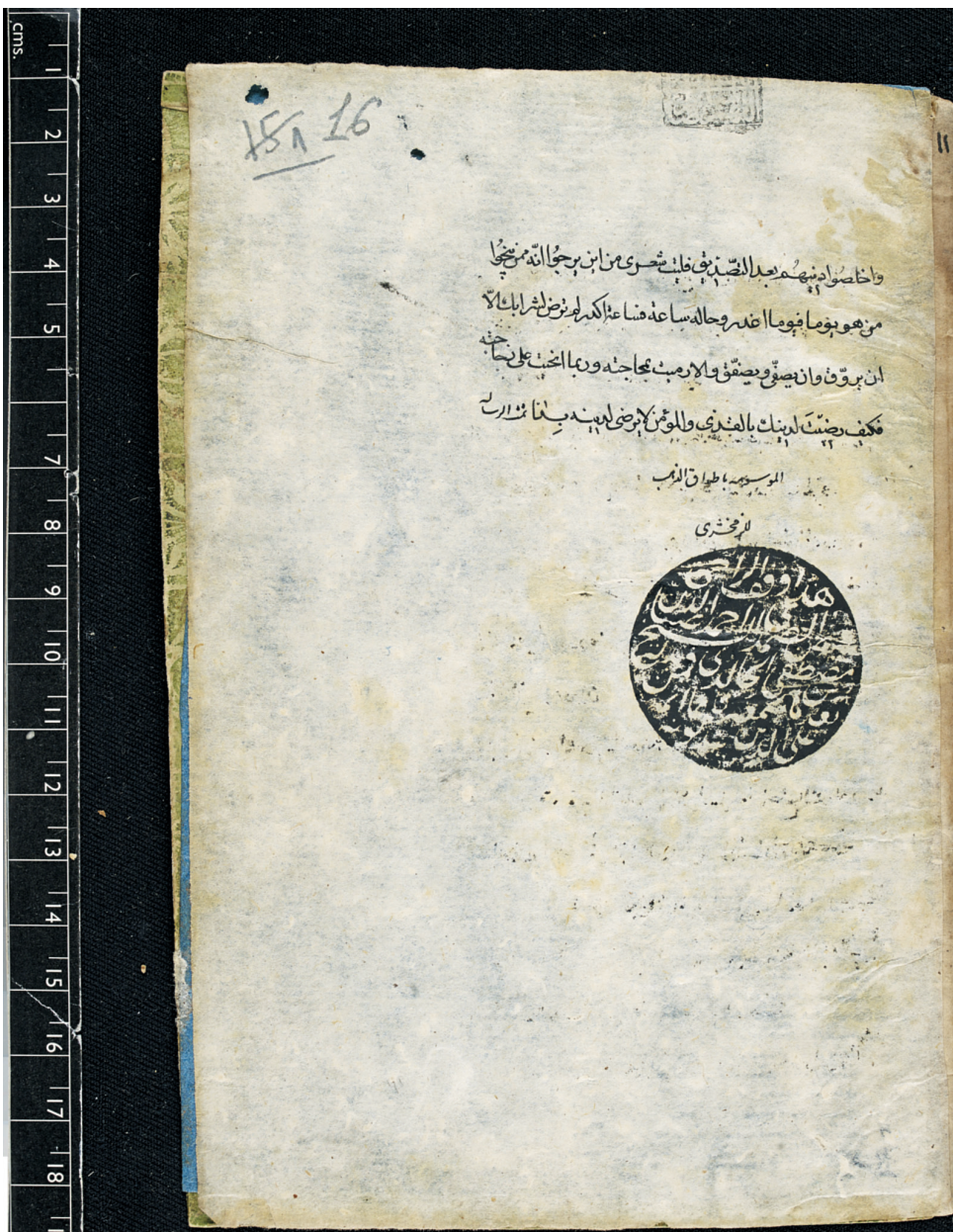


Fig. 9. Last sheet of Copy A-584

The text of the last sheet number 16 of Copy A-584 is different from that of the other copies:

tammat al-risālat al-mawsūmat bi-Aṭwāq al-ḡahab li-al-Zamaḡṣarī

*Al-Zamaḡṣarī's treatise entitled Golden Necklaces is completed*

Besides, there is the copy owner's seal on sheet 2, the back of sheet 7, the back of sheet 12, and the last sheet 16 that says:

*This is the property of al-Rāḡī Fayḍ al-Šamdī al-Šayḥ 'Aḥmad Ḫiyā' al-Dīn Mušṭafā al-Ḫālīdī. Sin will be on those who will change it after hearing of it.<sup>4</sup>*

It is worth noting that al-Zamaḥšarī's work is not free from contradictions or statements we could hardly agree with.

Article number 23 in Copy No.797 has the following text on the back of sheet 7:

'iḥḍar min al-ḥusūf wa al-kusūf wa lā tastami' li-qawl al-faylasūf lā ya'lū 'an yataḥammaq wa 'an yaḡlū wa yata'mmaq

*Fear a sun or moon eclipse and do not listen to the philosopher's speeches, for he behaves like a fool.*

In other instance, al-Zamaḥšarī urges to refrain from treatment and totally rely on God instead who can cure any ailment. For example, the author of the treatise writes in article 48 on the back of sheet 13 and on sheet 14:

ṭiqatuk bi-qawl al-ṭabīb maraḡ 'ašadd min maraḡdik

*Your belief in the doctor is more serious an illness than you own illness...*

And later:

fa-'akṭaruhum 'immā 'abd al-ṭabī'at wa 'immā 'ābid al-šalīb fi al-bay'at

*Most doctors are slaves of nature or Christians that worship the cross in the church.*

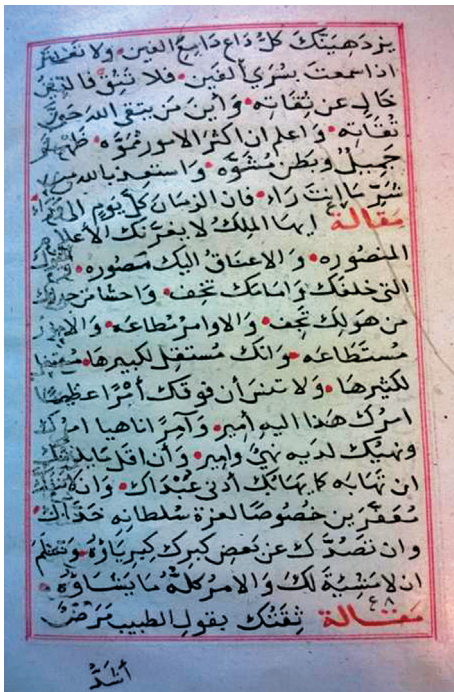


Fig. 10. Fragment of Copy No. 797

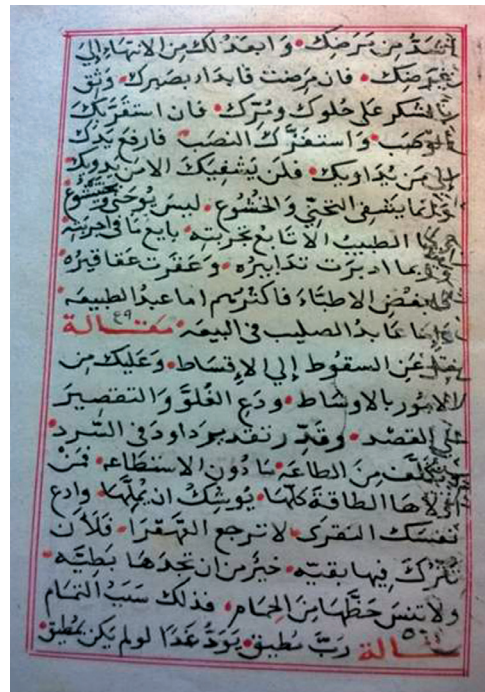


Fig. 11. Fragment of Copy No. 797

<sup>4</sup> Then whoever changes the bequest after hearing it, the sin shall be on those who make the change. Truly, Allah is All-Hearer, All-Knower. (Surah Al-Baqarah (The Cow), ayat 181).

At the same time, al-Zamaḥṣarī calls on people to act in a thought-through and weighted way, e.g. in article 21:

halumma 'ilā istiṣārat 'aqlik fa-tabaṣṣar wa 'ilā istiḥārat ḍihnik fa-tadabbar  
*Use your reason, think, act consciously...*

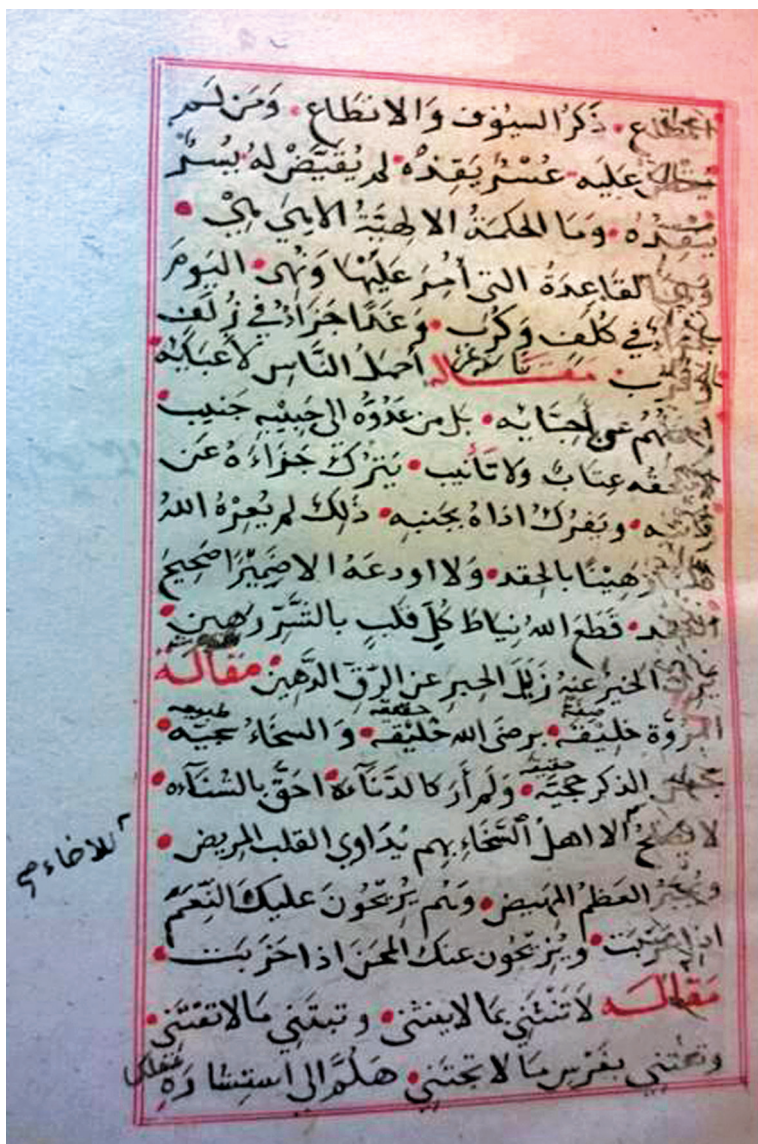


Fig. 12. Fragment of Copy No. 797

Al-Zamaḥṣarī's *Aṭwāq al-dahab* continues to interest scholars not only from the point of view of content but as a brilliant literary piece. This gives us reason to state that al-Zamaḥṣarī is rightly considered to be a talented and unique scholar of his time.

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