

# On the Final Days of Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī: A Study, Edition and Translation of an Anonymous Obituary

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Accepted 22 December 2024 | Published online 25 March 2025

## Abstract

This article presents a study, edition and translation of a hitherto unpublished and overlooked source, shedding new light on the final days and death of the celebrated Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī (d. 606/1210). An anonymous obituary, the text was composed by one of his students and is known to have survived in a single manuscript copy housed at the Library of the Prophet's Mosque, MS Medina, al-Masjid al-Nabawī 30/900. The article critically examines the obituary's authorship and biographical content, drawing on further historical, biographical, and geographical data to reconstruct the last two years of al-Rāzī's life against a turbulent background of factional conflict. It disproves the widely-accepted report that he was buried in secret and verifies his burial site.

## Keywords

Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī – Herat – Ghūrīds – Khwārazmshāh – Biography – Obituary

## Introduction

The anonymous obituary published and studied for the first time in this article sheds new light on the final days and death of Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī (d. 606/1210), now recognized as one of the most influential philosophers, theologians, jurists and Qur'ān exegetes of the premodern Islamic world. Complementing the reflections and instructions that he dictated eight months before his death

through his well-known testament-cum-will (*waṣīyya*), as well as scant and often unreliable information passed down indirectly in biographical sources and sporadic data found in his own works, this obituary provides us with the unique perspective of a contemporary eye-witness, clearly a student and close associate of al-Rāzī. The text had very limited circulation, having, to the best of our knowledge, survived in a single manuscript copy housed at the Library of the Prophet's Mosque in Medina. There is no evidence that any of his biographers had access to it.

In what follows, we provide an overview of the obituary and examine its authorship before turning to some of its biographical content. Drawing upon a mixture of historical, biographical, geographic and occasionally legal data, we leverage this newfound source to piece together the last two years of al-Rāzī's life against a turbulent backdrop of factional conflict. Amongst other things, we also disprove the widely-accepted report that he was buried in secret, and we verify his burial site. The article concludes with an edition and translation of the text.

## 1 The Obituary and Its Author

The text starts with praise of God (*ḥamdala*) and a prayer for the Prophet (*taṣliya*), followed by the transitional “now then” (*ammā ba'd*), and concludes with a prayer for al-Rāzī. These hallmarks indicate that it stands as an independent composition, rather than an excerpt from a larger work. The author narrates a sequence of events that surrounded al-Rāzī's death, starting with a severe illness that afflicted him and culminating in his passing away and funeral. The account is woven with a blend of mournful lament and eulogy.

The text portrays al-Rāzī as a godly figure during his illness, depicting him as having turned his back on this world, showing no fear of death, yearning to join the spiritual realm and to meet God in the hereafter, and expressing complete reliance on him. He sometimes conveys these attitudes through poetry.<sup>1</sup>

1 Al-Rāzī had a keen interest in poetry and composed poetry himself in both Arabic and Persian. Examples of his Arabic poetry are preserved by biographers, such as Ibn al-Shaʿār and Ibn Abī Uṣaybiʿa. Ibn al-Shaʿār, *Qalā'id al-jumān*, ed. Kāmil al-Jubūrī, 9 vols. (Beirut: Dār al-kutub al-ʿilmiyya, 2005), 5:84–88; Ibn Abī Uṣaybiʿa, *ʿUyūn al-anbāʾ fī ṭabaqāt al-aṭibbāʾ*, ed. and trans. Emilie Savage-Smith, Simon Swain, Geert Jan van Gelder under the title *A Literary History of Medicine: The 'Uyūn al-anbāʾ fī ṭabaqāt al-aṭibbāʾ of Ibn Abī Uṣaybiʿah*, 5 vols., numbered 1, 2–1, 2–2, 3–1, 3–2 (Leiden: Brill, 2020), 2–2:874–76. In the obituary, he is quoted reciting poetry thrice, starting with a Persian quatrain that is sometimes attributed to ʿUmar al-Khayyām (d. 517/1126) (ll. 34–5; tr. ll. 52–5). The author, however, states that it was

It is unsurprising that the text also depicts his death as a moment of profound misfortune for Islam and Muslims (ll. 61–2; 65–7; tr. ll. 97; 102–6). By the time of al-Rāzī's illness, he had achieved an unparalleled scholarly and public stature: he reportedly had three hundred students;<sup>2</sup> he was the foremost preacher in Herat and was surrounded by official pomp, ceremony and prestige under both the Ghūrīds and Khwārazmians;<sup>3</sup> and he stood as the preeminent scholar in the Islamic East, enjoying such an illustrious transregional reputation that he received a personal honor from the Abbasid Caliph al-Nāṣir li-Dīn Allāh (r. 575–622/1180–1225).<sup>4</sup>

Judging by its expression of raw and profound sorrow and the author's pleas to God for patience, the obituary must have been composed upon al-Rāzī's death. Although the author is nowhere identified in the sole manuscript copy known to us, he is evidently a close student of al-Rāzī: the author mentions hearing him express a certain view on numerous occasions (l. 28; tr. l. 44) and provides firsthand accounts of most events. Only once does he report an incident indirectly, introducing it with the passive verb, "it was related" (l. 30; tr. l. 46). The authenticity of the text is beyond question.<sup>5</sup>

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composed (*ansha'a*) by al-Rāzī; and indeed, Ibn Abī Uṣaybi'a remarks that al-Rāzī's Persian poetry included quatrains. The three couplets of Persian poetry he is then quoted to have recited (l. 37–9; tr. ll. 57–62) are by Sanā'ī (d. 525/1131), *Ḥadiqat al-ḥaqīqa wa-sharī'at al-tarīqa*, ed. Mudarris Raḍawī (Tehran: Dānishgāh-i Tihirān, 1359 AH/1980), 327; al-Rāzī quotes him by name in *Asrār al-tanzīl wa-anwār al-ta'wīl*, ed. Maḥmūd M. Muḥammad, Bābā al-Shaykh 'Umar and Ṣāliḥ M. 'Abd al-Fattāḥ (Beirut: Dār al-ma'rifa, 2011), 148. The couplet of Arabic poetry (l. 50; tr. ll. 78–9) is not attested elsewhere and is presumably his own.

2 Ibn al-Sha'ār, *Qalā'id*, 5:83; al-Ṣafādī, *al-Wāfi bi-l-wafayāt*, ed. Hellmut Ritter *et al.*, 30 vols. (Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1962–2008), 4:248.

3 Ayman Shihadeh, "Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī and Ghūrīd Self-Fashioning," *Afghanistan* 5.2 (2022): 253–92, esp. 270–71.

4 The Caliph invested him with the title "he who summons to God" (*al-dā'i ilā llāh*). See Shihadeh, "Al-Rāzī and Ghūrīd Self-Fashioning," 282–84. The title appears in the obituary (l. 20; tr. l. 33).

5 A possible author is the genealogist 'Azīz al-Dīn Ismā'īl b. al-Ḥusayn al-Azwarqānī al-Marwazī (b. 572/1176, d. after 618/1221), who was a student and close associate of al-Rāzī and was in Herat shortly before the latter's death. On him, see Yāqūt al-Ḥamawī, *Mu'jam al-udabā'*, ed. Iḥsān 'Abbās, 7 vols. (Beirut: Dār al-gharb al-islāmī, 1993), 2:652–55. During this period, he penned a book on genealogy that al-Rāzī commissioned, and titled it after him, *al-Fakhrī fī ansāb al-ṭālibīyyīn*, ed. Maḥdī al-Rajā'ī (Qom: Maktabat Āyat Allāh al-Mar'ashī, 1409 AH/1988 or 1989), 5–7. He mentions that he discussed a certain point with al-Rāzī on "multiple occasions," including on 13 Rabī' 11 606 (15 October 1209). Al-Rāzī, *Fakhrī*, 231. There is partial overlap between the epithets appended to al-Rāzī's name in both the obituary and the dedication in al-Azwarqānī's book. Al-Rāzī, *Fakhrī*, 5: *mafkhār banī Ādam ... Fakhr al-milla wa-l-dīn nāṣir al-islām wa-l-muslimīn ... mufasssīr ... sulṭān 'ulamā' al-sharq wa-l-gharb ḥujjāt Allāh 'alā l-khalq*; cf. ll. 13–16 of the obituary; tr. ll. 22–7). However, the similarities are

In its form, subject matter and purpose, the obituary does not fit neatly in a particular genre. Unlike conventional biographical texts, it is focused exclusively on al-Rāzī's illness and death, and says nothing about his earlier life and scholarly career. It is also not a letter addressed to a specific recipient, and almost certainly was not intended for one, as otherwise the author would have offered words of condolence and solace. Nevertheless, it remains uncertain whether the author may have circulated the text to multiple recipients. At any rate, it is evident that the primary purpose of the obituary was not solely to inform a contemporary audience of the news of al-Rāzī's passing, but rather to memorialize the passing of a great scholar and to capture an edifying portrait of his final days for posterity.

## 2 Al-Rāzī's Illness and Death

The narrative opens with a sudden deterioration in al-Rāzī's health, occurring just before daybreak on 27 Sha'bān 606 (24 February 1210). While the illness is unspecified, it was evidently acute and severely debilitating; it is described as catastrophic (*balīyya fajī'a*, *raziyya fajī'a*, *dāhiya dahyā'*). The author notes that following this occurrence, al-Rāzī disregarded the remedial measures prescribed to him by physicians (l. 24; tr. ll. 37–9), a sign that he realized the imminent approach of death and recognized that such measures could only prolong his suffering. His health continued to decline until he took his dying breaths in the late afternoon of Monday, 1 Shawwāl 606 (29 March 1210) (ll. 57–8; tr. ll. 89–90).<sup>6</sup> This narrative thus suggests that al-Rāzī's illness lasted for a little over a month before his death. By contrast, earlier studies have assumed that his illness lasted as long as eight months, having presumably started shortly before he dictated his testament on 21 Muḥarram 606 (26 July 1209).<sup>7</sup>

However, there is good evidence that a prolonged illness started well before the dates given in the obituary and the testament. The physician and

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overall inconclusive, as at least some of these epithets were used widely for al-Rāzī by his contemporaries.

6 He died when sunlight had "turned yellow" (*isfarra*), which is to say shortly before sunset (l. 61; tr. l. 95). The death date and time are confirmed by the copyist of a manuscript copy of al-Rāzī's *Kitāb al-Jabr wa-l-qadar*. MS Istanbul, Süleymaniye Library, Esad Efendi 1278, fols. 1b–174b, fol. 111a. The copyist, 'Abd al-Jabbār b. Muḥsin al-Jīlī, is a student of al-Rāzī. Loc. cit., fol. 112a. He met the biographer Ibn al-Sha'ār in Iraq or Syria. Ibn al-Sha'ār, *Qalā'id*, 5:84.

7 For instance, Frank Griffel, *The Formation of Post-Classical Philosophy in Islam* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2021), 548; and for the date, Ibn Abī Uṣaybi'a, *Uyūn*, 2–2:871.

biographer Ibn Abī Uṣaybiʿa (d. 668/1270) reports that the testament was dictated when al-Rāzī's "illness intensified" (*fī shiddat maraḍihi*) (and not "when," or "soon after he fell ill").<sup>8</sup> He furthermore reports that al-Rāzī was taken ill in Khwārazm and was then brought back to his hometown of Herat, where he later died from the after-effects (*ʿaqābīl*) of the illness. Ibn Abī Uṣaybiʿa's report that al-Rāzī fell ill shortly before he returned from Khwārazm to Herat is confirmed by the author of the obituary, who reports that, following his return, al-Rāzī said that when he was in Khwārazm he beseeched God that he grant him to pass away on the soil of Herat (ll. 72–3; tr. ll. 116–18). This strongly suggests that he fell seriously ill and felt that death was near when he was still in Khwārazm.

This allows us to date the start of al-Rāzī's illness with some precision. We know that he left his home in Herat and travelled to Khwārazm sometime in mid-604 (early 1208). In a note dated 14 Shaʿbān 604 (4 March 1208), he states that he was residing at the palace of the Khwārazmshāh ʿAlāʾ al-Dīn Muḥammad (r. 596–617/1200–20) in his capital Gurganj (Jurjāniyya).<sup>9</sup> This move was most likely connected to circumstances that Herat was undergoing at the time, as after three decades of relative stability under Ghūrid rule, the city was then experiencing a particularly tumultuous phase.

This phase began to unfold after the city passed on to Khwārazmian rule, following the assassination of the great Ghūrid sultan Muʿizz al-Dīn Muḥammad b. Sām (r. 569–602/1173–1206) in northern India. The city's population, still predominantly pro-Ghūrid and agitated by the excesses of the unruly Khwārazmian troops, resented their new rulers.<sup>10</sup> The tension came to a head in 604/1207–8 when a contingent of Khwārazmian troops arrested and executed the city's governor ʿIzz al-Dīn al-Ḥusayn b. Kharmīl for insubordination. A vizier of Ibn Kharmīl named Saʿd al-Dīn al-Tirmidhī, a provincial vizier appointed in Ghūrid times, subsequently shut the city gates and declared

8 Ibn Abī Uṣaybiʿa, *Uyūn*, 2–2:871.

9 This is the date on which he completed the third and final section of *Risālat Dhamm ladhdhāt al-dunyā*, as stated in the colophon. The first two sections were composed in Herat. Al-Rāzī, *Dhamm ladhdhāt al-dunyā*, in Ayman Shihadeh, *The Teleological Ethics of Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī* (Leiden: Brill, 2006), 265. It is noteworthy that a manuscript copy of his *Kitāb al-Firāsa* was completed by al-Rāzī's aforementioned student al-Jilī (cf. n. 6 above) in Khwārazm on 1 Shaʿbān 604 (20 February 1208). MS Istanbul, Süleymaniye Library, Esad Efendi 1278, fols. 175b–191b, fol. 192b.

10 ʿIzz al-Dīn b. al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil fī l-tārīkh*, ed. Carl Johann Tornberg, 14 vols. (Leiden: Brill, 1851–76), 12:162; 12:172. On the Khwārazmian army's reputation for unruliness, see Clifford Edmund Bosworth, "The Political and Dynastic History of the Iranian World (A.D. 1000–1217)," in *The Cambridge History of Iran*, vol. 5: *The Saljuq and Mongol Periods*, ed. John Andrew Boyle (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1968–91), 1–202, 5:183.

allegiance to the Ghūrid Ghiyāth al-Dīn Maḥmūd (r. 602–7/1206–10).<sup>11</sup> The Khwārazmshāh responded by ordering a siege of Herat, during which many were killed. Shortly afterwards, he was lost in battle with the Qarā Khitāy and presumed dead, plunging Khurasan in a brief period of uncertainty as a major power struggle loomed. However, it turned out that the Khwārazmshāh had only been captured and managed to escape. He then swiftly restored control over his dominion, personally joined the siege of Herat, and reconquered the city in 605/1208.<sup>12</sup>

Against this background, we can attempt to interpret al-Rāzī's movements. His move to Gurganj in mid-604 (early 1208) was most likely prompted by the pro-Ghūrid rebellion that flared up in Herat, and may have preceded the Khwārazmian siege. He presumably sought refuge from the impending conflict and more importantly felt fearful of reprisal from the pro-Ghūrid rebels. His caution was well founded, as he had already become closely connected to the Khwārazmshāh and moreover was accused of having conspired, on the latter's behalf, in the murder of the Ghūrid Mu'izz al-Dīn.<sup>13</sup>

Al-Rāzī was still in Gurganj on 6 Rabī' 11 605 (18 October 1208), though by then he had moved from temporary accommodation at the sultan's palace to his own residence.<sup>14</sup> He was back in Herat by 27 Rajab 605 (4 February 1209).<sup>15</sup>

11 Ibn al-Athīr, *Kāmil*, 12:172–4. On the post of provincial vizier, see Heribert Horst, *Die Staatsverwaltung der Grosselgüen und Hōrazmšāhs (1038–1231): eine Untersuchung nach Urkundenformularen der Zeit* (Wiesbaden: F. Steiner, 1964), 48–49.

12 Ibn al-Athīr, *Kāmil*, 12:175–76. Ibn al-Athīr says that the siege of Herat lasted for one year and one month, while Jūzjānī says that it lasted for eleven months. *Ṭabaqāt-i Nāṣiri*, ed. 'Abd al-Ḥayy Ḥabībī, 2 vols. (Kabul: Anjuman-i tārikh-i Afghānistān, 1963–64), 1:259; cf. Peter Jackson, "The Fall of the Ghurid Dynasty," in *Studies on the Mongol Empire and Early Muslim India* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009), vi, 16.

13 Shihadeh, "Al-Rāzī and Ghūrid Self-Fashioning," 268–69.

14 The author's colophon at the end of Book 3 of *al-Maṭālīb al-ʿālīya* states that it was completed then and there, and gives the name of the street in which the house is located. However, the name is illegible in the only manuscript copy in which the colophon is transmitted, MS Dublin, Chester Beatty Library, Ar 3114, fol. 147a (*fī l-dār al-mamlūka lī fī sikkat* ...). It is absent in the printed edition of the work. Book 2 of the *Maṭālīb* was also completed in Gurganj, in the second half of Rabī' 1 605 (early October 1208). *Al-Maṭālīb al-ʿālīya min al-ʿilm al-ilāhī*, ed. Aḥmad Ḥ. al-Saqqā, 8 vols. (published in 9 vols; however, vol. 9 is in fact a separate work wrongly included in the edition) (Beirut: Dār al-kitāb al-ʿarabī, 1987), 2:151. Books 4–7 were completed between 1 Jumādā 1 605 (11 November 1208) and 4 Rajab 605 (12 January 1209), but the location is not specified. *Maṭālīb*, 4:427; 5:185; 6:215; 7:428–29.

15 An anonymous note at the end of a manuscript of Avicenna's *Risālat al-Ḥudūd* states that the text was read with al-Rāzī in Herat on that date. 'Abd al-Amīr al-A'sam, *al-Muṣṭalaḥ al-falsafī 'inda l-ʿarab* (Cairo: al-Hay'a al-miṣriyya al-ʿamma li-l-kitāb, 1989), 132. Two brothers also read al-Rāzī's *Ma'ālīm* and *Arbaʿīn* with him and received a *ḥadīth* from him

So at some point between these two dates, he fell ill in Gurganj and was subsequently brought back to Herat. Judging by the rate of his writing productivity and its abrupt end, he is likely to have returned closer to the latter date, for between Rabi' 1 (October 1208) and Rajab 605 (January 1209) al-Rāzī completed books 2–8 of his major work *al-Maṭālib al-ʿāliya*, but he is not known to have written any works after the latter date.<sup>16</sup> It is more plausible that his illness started after this period of writing activity, rather than before or during it. By the time of al-Rāzī's return to Herat, the Khwārazmshāh had restored his control over the city, and he accommodated al-Rāzī upon his arrival at the royal residence (*dār al-salṭana*), presumably located in the citadel of Herat, where the latter remained until he died.<sup>17</sup> At the royal residence, his safety was guaranteed and he received the best medical attention.

In all likelihood, therefore, al-Rāzī's stretch of prolonged illness started in mid-to-late Rajab 605 (late January 1209), approximately fourteen months prior to his passing on Monday, 1 Shawwāl 606 (29 March 1210). For much of this period, he was able to deliver lessons and sermons, although these are likely to have been delivered to smaller groups. We have reports of individuals studying with him; and the obituary reports that he delivered his last lesson on Friday, 22 Sha'bān 606 (19 February 1210) (l. 44; tr. l. 70).<sup>18</sup> Six months into his illness, al-Rāzī's health may have deteriorated to the extent that he felt that he needed to dictate his testament on 21 Muḥarram 606 (26 July 1209), although his health is likely to have subsequently improved. On 13 Rabi' 11 606 (15 October 1209), he hosted officials and other notables on the occasion of

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in the city in Ramaḍān 605 (February–March 1209). 'Afīf al-Dīn al-Maṭarī (not al-'Ubādī, as in the published edition), *Dhayl ṭabaqāt al-fuqahā' al-Shāfi'īyyīn*, ed. Aḥmad 'U. Hāshim and Muḥammad Z. M. 'Azab (Cairo: Maktabat al-thaqāfa al-dīniyya, 1989), 28–30. Cf. Eşref Altaş, "Fahreddin er-Rāzī'nin hayatı, hâmileleri, ilmi ve siyasi ilişkileri," in *İslâm düşüncesinin dönüşüm çağında Fahreddin er-Râzî*, ed. Ömer Türker and Osman Demir (Istanbul: İSAM, 2013), 41–90, at 79–80.

16 I examine the complexities of dating the *Maṭālib* and al-Rāzī's other later works in a forthcoming study. Books 2–7 of the *Maṭālib* are dated in the author's colophons, respectively, to the second half of Rabi' 1 605 (early October 1208), 6 Rabi' 11 605 (18 October 1208), 1 Jumādā 1 605 (11 November 1208), 17 Jumādā 1 605 (27 November 1208), 12 Jumādā 11 605 (22 December 1208), and 4 Rajab 605 (12 January 1209). Book 8, probably incomplete, is undated but must have been written immediately after this last date. Al-Rāzī also penned his short theological work *Ma'ālim uşūl al-dīn* during this period. He did so in one day, on 7 Jumādā 1 605 (17 November 1208), as he indicates in a note found in MS Istanbul University Library 3613, fol. 82a.

17 Al-Şafadī, *Wāfi*, 4:250; Ibn Abī Uşaybi'a, *Uyūn*, 2–2:871. The latter reports that al-Rāzī's children continued to reside at the royal residence after his death.

18 See n. 15.

the circumcision of his son Shams al-Dīn Abū Bakr ‘Abdallāh.<sup>19</sup> The later date given in the obituary, 27 Sha‘bān 606 (24 February 1210), marks another, sudden deterioration in his health, resulting in an acute illness that ultimately led to his death a little over a month afterwards.

### 3 Funeral and Burial

The obituary also affords details on al-Rāzī’s funeral and burial. At the end of his testament, al-Rāzī dictated a will consisting of various instructions affecting him and his family to his students and associates. These include the following instruction to the student who wrote the testament down:

Hereby I command him and all my students and all who are indebted to me that, at the hour of my death, they should go to the greatest lengths in the concealment of my death and not let anyone know about it. Then, they should cover me in a shroud for the grave and bury me according to the stipulations of the religious law. Let them carry me to the mountain that is near to the village of Mazdākhān and there lay me in my grave [...]<sup>20</sup>

There are two instructions here, one concerning the need to conceal his death, and the other concerning the burial place. But were these instructions carried out?

Al-Rāzī’s highly unusual instruction that his death should be concealed and that his funeral and burial should be conducted in secret reveals a profound anxiety. The fear that his remains might be exhumed or his tomb desecrated, apart from being an indignity, would have caused great suffering to his soul, for in his later works al-Rāzī held that the soul maintained a posthumous

19 Al-Azwarqānī, *Fakhrī*, 231. Shāfi‘īs prefer to conduct circumcision on the seventh day after a child’s birth, but consider it obligatory on puberty. Shams al-Dīn Abū Bakr could not have been a newborn when he was circumcised, as he is named in the testament, dated 21 Muḥarram 606 (26 July 1209), and is said there to have exhibited signs of intelligence. Al-Rāzī, *Waṣīyya*, in Muḥammad al-Zarkān, *Fakhr al-dīn wa-ārā’uhu al-kalāmiyya wa-l-falsafīyya* (Beirut: Dār al-fikr, 1963), 642; cf. Ibn Abī Uṣaybi’a, *‘Uyūn*, 2–2:870. He is therefore likely to have been circumcised around the age of ten.

20 Ibn Abī Uṣaybi’a, *‘Uyūn*, 2–2:874; translated by Emilie Savage-Smith *et al.*, *Literary History*, 3–2:972, with minor amendments. Cf. al-Rāzī, *Waṣīyya*, in al-Zarkān, *Fakhr al-Dīn*, 643. Although the testament received some attention in recent studies, none are relevant to the biographical questions examined here.

connection to the body and was affected favorably or adversely by aspects of the body's condition and surroundings.<sup>21</sup> As for the source of this threat, the biographer Ibn al-Qiftī (d. 646/1248) explains that al-Rāzī made the request for fear that his remains would be exhumed and mutilated by "common people" (*ʿamma*).<sup>22</sup> This interpretation has been accepted universally and understood to refer to the Karrāmī populace of Herat, who continued to harbor enmity towards al-Rāzī for his leading role under the Ghūrids in promoting Ashʿarism and Shāfiʿism at the expense of Karrāmism.<sup>23</sup> Yet while the Karrāmī populace did pose an immediate threat, al-Rāzī was likely more concerned about the prospect of the resurgence of a Ghūrid faction, who would have exacted revenge against him in the established practice of exhuming, mutilating and burning an enemy's remains.<sup>24</sup> As already mentioned, he stood accused by some of plotting the assassination, just over three years prior, of the Ghūrid sultan Muʿizz al-Dīn on behalf of the Khwārazmshāh, whom he now served. What is more, during his political career he earned the enmity of the Karrāmī faction of the Ghūrids, who made an unsuccessful attempt to establish control over the Ghūrid realm after Muʿizz al-Dīn's death.<sup>25</sup> The years following the assassination were marked by great uncertainty in Ghūrid and former-Ghūrid territory, and with Herat recently emerging from a pro-Ghūrid rebellion, a Ghūrid comeback could not be discounted. It is likely this prospect that concerned al-Rāzī the most.

So extraordinary was al-Rāzī's instruction that his funeral and burial be conducted in secret that it attracted considerable attention in later sources

21 For instance, al-Rāzī, *Maṭālib*, 7:275–77.

22 ʿAlī b. Yūsuf b. al-Qiftī, *Tārīkh al-ḥukamāʾ*, ed. Julius Lippert (Leipzig: Dieterich'sche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1903), 291.

23 Shihadeh, "Al-Rāzī and Ghūrid Self-Fashioning." Ghūrid control of Herat ended just over three years before al-Rāzī dictated his testament. Although his public role changed under the Khwārazmshāh, he must have continued to advocate against the Karrāmiyya. There was even a rumor that he died after being poisoned by them. Ibn al-Qiftī, *Tārīkh*, 292; al-Ṣafādī, *Wāfi*, 4:258; ʿAbdallāh b. Asʿad al-Yāfiʿī, *Mirʾāt al-jinān wa-ʿibrat al-yaqẓān fī maʾrifat mā yuʿtabaru min ḥawādith al-zamān*, 4 vols. (Beirut: Dār al-kutub al-ʿilmiyya, 1997), 4:8.

24 For an earlier example, see Jūzjānī, *Ṭabaqāt*, 1:353–54.

25 Jackson, "Fall of the Ghurid Dynasty," 6ff.; Ibn al-Athīr, *Kāmil*, 12:146–48. This faction was led by the hard-line Karrāmī ʿAlāʾ al-Dīn Muḥammad b. Abī ʿAlī (d. shortly after 612/1215), who was al-Rāzī's principal antagonist when the latter was in the service of the Ghūrids. Shihadeh, "Al-Rāzī and Ghūrid Self-Fashioning," 262; 265–66; 269. Although ʿAlāʾ al-Dīn was imprisoned by Ghiyāth al-Dīn Maḥmūd, who established himself as Ghūrid sultan, the possibility of a resurgence of the Karrāmī faction could not have been excluded in 605/1209. Like his father Ghiyāth al-Dīn Muḥammad, Ghiyāth al-Dīn Maḥmūd was a Shāfiʿī.

and gave rise to embellishments in less reliable biographical accounts. Thus, al-Shahrazūri (d. after 687/1288), an Illuminationist biographer unsympathetic to al-Rāzī, makes the apparently interpretive claim that he asked to be buried under the cloak of night, clearly the best way to conduct a secret burial.<sup>26</sup> Ibn al-Qiftī recounts the peculiar report that a mock burial was staged publicly at the location designated in the testament and that al-Rāzī was in reality interred secretly at his home.<sup>27</sup> Both reports are almost certainly prompted by the contents of the widely-read testament and do not rely on independent data.

The obituary, in contrast, suggests that al-Rāzī's instructions were not carried out. The author cites his expressed wish for a large group (*jamā'a 'azīma*) of the residents of Herat to attend his funeral prayer, and confirms that this indeed is what occurred (ll. 71–4; tr. ll. 114–18). His body was duly carried by a large group of mourners in the early morning (*ghadā*) of Tuesday, 2 Shawwāl 606 (30 March 1210), who proceeded first to open ground (*ṣaḥrā'*) outside the city walls, where the funeral prayer was held.<sup>28</sup> The expression *ṣaḥrā'* often denotes a large open ground used for communal festival (*'id*) prayers, and in this instance should be understood to refer to the festival prayer ground outside Herat. This underscores the large turnout of people who attended al-Rāzī's funeral prayer.<sup>29</sup>

26 Shams al-Dīn al-Shahrazūri, *Nuzhat al-arwāḥ wa-rawḍat al-afrāḥ*, ed. 'Abd al-Karīm Bū Shuwayrib (Tripoli: Jam'iyyat al-da'wa al-islāmiyya al-'ālamīyya, 1988), 394.

27 Ibn al-Qiftī, *Tārīkh*, 291; and, following him, Bar Hebraeus (= Ghrīghūryūs al-Malaṭī b. al-'Ibrī), *Tārīkh mukhtaṣar al-duwal*, ed. Anṭūn Ṣāliḥānī (Beirut: al-Maṭba'a al-kāthūlīkiyya li-l-ābā' al-yasū'iyyīn, 1890), 419.

28 The timeline is more convincing than Ibn Khallikān's report that al-Rāzī was buried later on the same day he died. Shams al-Dīn b. Khallikān, *Wafayāt al-a'yān*, ed. Iḥsān 'Abbās, 8 vols. (Beirut: Dār Ṣādir, 1968–77), 4:252.

29 The expression *ṣaḥrā'* is used here in the sense of bare open ground. Legal discussions on the preferred location of the festival prayer posit a choice between the mosque and the *ṣaḥrā'*. E.g. al-Ḥusayn b. Mas'ūd al-Baghawī, *al-Tahdhīb*, ed. 'Ādil A. 'Abd al-Mawjūd and 'Alī M. Mu'awwaḍ, 8 vols. (Beirut: Dār al-kutub al-'ilmiyya, 1997), 2:374. And the funerals of notables were often conducted at festival prayer grounds. So it is reasonable to conclude that al-Rāzī's funeral prayer took place at the festival prayer grounds of Herat. In earlier, Ghaznavid times, those grounds were located in the district of Khiyābān. Abū l-Faḍl Muḥammad b. al-Ḥusayn al-Bayhaqī, *Tārīkh-i Bayhaqī*, trans. Clifford Edmund Bosworth under the title *The History of Beyhaqī*, 3 vols. (Boston, Mass.: Ilex Foundation, 2011), 2:277, where the district is referred to using its earlier name, Khudābān, to which we shall return in n. 36 below. This was probably the same location that the festival prayer ground had in later, Timurid times – namely, at the southern foot of mount Mukhtār (see the map on p. 193). As we shall see shortly, al-Rāzī was buried close by in the same district of Khiyābān.

Al-Rāzī's supposed lack of concern for concealing his death and subsequent proceedings can be interpreted in more than one way. For some reason or other, perhaps because of shifts in political circumstances that diminished the perceived threat of a Ghūrīd resurgence, al-Rāzī may have had a change of heart in the eight months after dictating his testament and decided that it was no longer necessary to conceal his death. Another possibility is that, despite his instructions, news of his death swiftly and widely circulated in Herat, making it impossible to avoid a public funeral and burial. It is also conceivable that the author's portrayal of the funeral as having been well attended is a fiction intended to detract from al-Rāzī's instruction that it be concealed, which the author would have perceived as an undignified way to lay the great scholar to rest. We shall see shortly that the location of al-Rāzī's tomb suggests that the burial could not have been conducted in secret, making this last scenario unlikely.

As for the instruction that al-Rāzī should be buried on a mountain (which we should understand to mean the top or side of a hill or mountain) near a village called Mazdākhān (or Muzdākhān), premodern and recent sources have, again, accepted that he was indeed buried at that location.<sup>30</sup> This village was most likely located in the southern foot of the ridge north of Herat, consisting mostly of hills with an altitude of 200–300m above the city and reaching peaks of approximately 500–600m. However, the precise location of this village remains unverifiable, as there appears to be no mention of it in independent sources. As far as I can tell, all other premodern and modern references to Mazdākhān draw directly or indirectly on its mention in al-Rāzī's testament.<sup>31</sup> A more serious problem arises from the inconsistency between al-Rāzī's chosen resting place and the topography of the actual location of his putative tomb. The tomb today lies approximately 2km north of where the old city walls

30 Ibn Khallikān, 4:252 (who pronounces the name of the village as Muzdākhān; the original name was presumably Mazdā Khān); and following him, Fakhr al-Dīn b. al-Mu'allim, *Najm al-muhtadī wa-rajm al-mu'tadī*, ed. Bilāl al-Saqqā, 2 vols. (Damascus: Dār al-taqwā, 2019), 1:543; Badr al-Dīn al-'Aynī, *Iqd al-jumān fī tārikh ahl al-zamān*, ed. Muḥammad M. Amīn, 4 vols. (Cairo: Dār al-kutub wa-l-wathā'iq al-qawmiyya, 2010–14), 3:240; Terry Allen, *A Catalogue of the Toponyms and Monuments of Timurid Herat* (Cambridge, Mass.: Aga Khan Program for Islamic Architecture at Harvard University and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 1981), 180; Aḥmad M. A. El-Galli, "The History and Doctrines of the Karrāmiyya Sect with Special Reference to al-Rāzī's Criticism" (doctoral thesis, University of Edinburgh, 1970), 27–29; Altaş, "Rāzī'nin hayatı," 80–81; Griffel, *Formation*, 299.

31 This is true, for instance, of Saljūqī, who revived Mazdākhān as a toponym in contemporary Herat, *Khiyābān* (Kabul: Anjuman-i jāmi, Wizārat-i maṭbū'āt, 1343 AH (1964), 66, and, following him, Allen, *Catalogue*, 75.

of Herat once stood, alongside the important road that historically connected the city to northern Khurasan.<sup>32</sup> It is located in what was the district (*bulūk*) of Khiyābān, an important district of premodern Herat lying north of the city walls. The present site has long been recognized as the location of the tomb, at least since the 8th/14th century, when notable individuals were reported to have been buried within its walled enclosure (*ḥaḣīra*). The earliest known individual was a Sufi named Qiwām al-Dīn Muḥammad al-Biṣṭāmī, who died in 743/1343.<sup>33</sup> By that time, Khiyābān had become the architectural focus of Timurid Herat, and al-Rāzī's tomb in particular had grown in importance and become a center for funerary construction in the area.<sup>34</sup> The problem is that this location clearly does not match the one specified in al-Rāzī's testament, because Khiyābān lies on the plain of Herat and is devoid of any prominent topographic features. The present tomb is located about 1.5km, as the crow flies, from the foot of the nearest hill, and several kilometers from the nearest sizeable hill or mountain.<sup>35</sup> It follows that al-Rāzī's putative tomb in Khiyābān cannot be located at the place described in the testament. If he was indeed buried near Mazdākhān, then the present site of his tomb must be spurious.

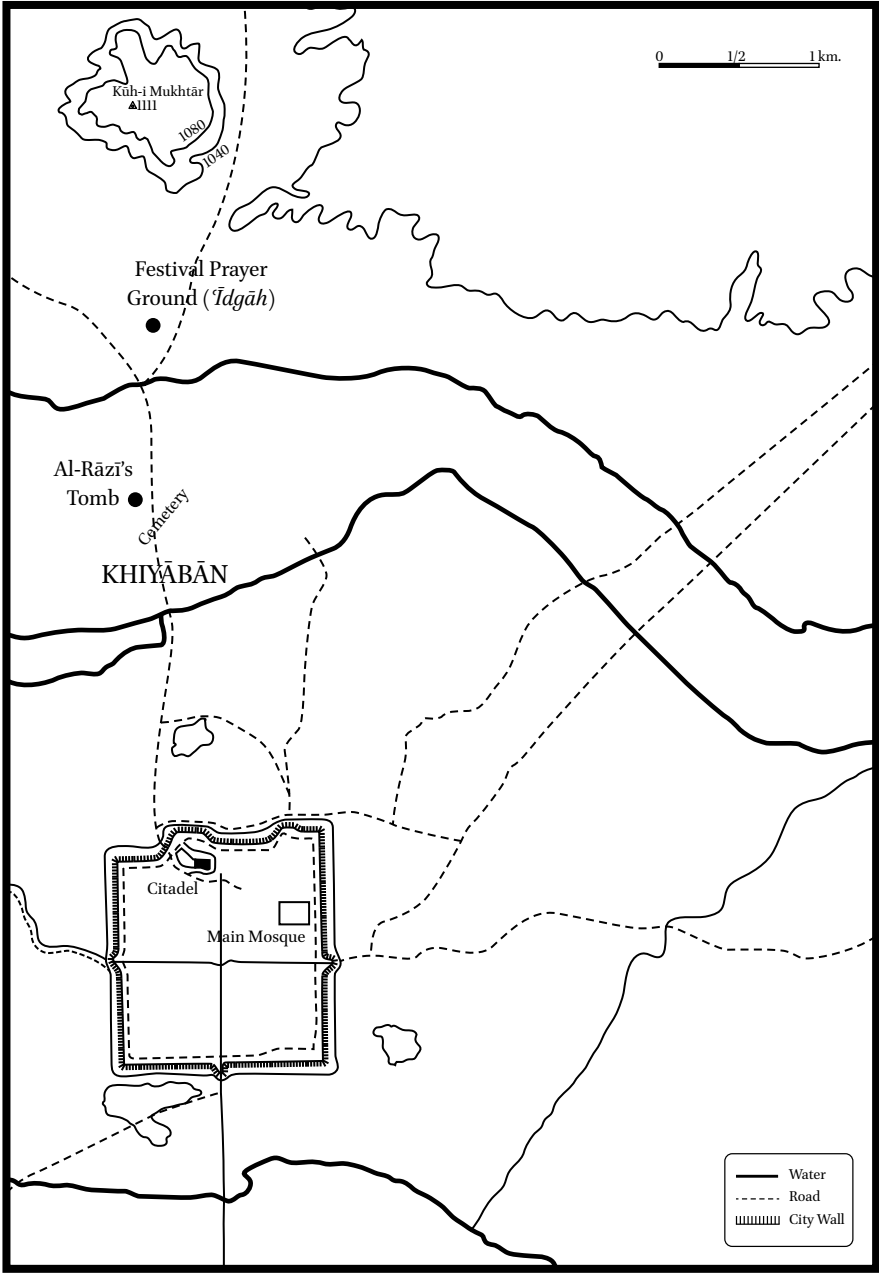
The obituary, however, allows us to verify the present burial site with a high degree of confidence. The author reports that after the funeral prayer, al-Rāzī's body was buried beside his mother's grave in the cemetery located in Khudābān (l. 74; tr. ll. 118–19). Khudābān is a well-attested earlier form of

32 Coordinates: 34°21'54.6"N 62°11'04.9"E. See the map opposite.

33 Faṣīḥ Khwāfī (d. after 845/1441), *Mujmal-i Faṣīḥī*, ed. Maḥmūd Farrukh, 3 vols. (Mashhad: Kitāb-furūshī-yi bāstān, 1960–62), 3:64. A grandson of Timūr was also buried in the enclosure in 809/1407. 'Abdallāh b. Luṭf Allāh Ḥāfiẓ-i Abrū, *Zubdat al-tawārīkh*, ed. Kamāl H. S. Jawādī, 2 vols. (Tehran: Sāzmān-i chāp wa intishārāt-i wizārat-i farhang wa irshād-i islāmī, 1372 AHsh/1993–94), 1:162. See Allen, *Catalogue*, 180, for references to further burials in the enclosure. References to the site are also attested in 9th/15th-century sources, particularly Mu'in al-Dīn Isfīzārī (fl. late 9th/15th c.), *Rawḣāt al-jannāt fī awṣāf madīnat Harāt*, ed. Muḥammad Kāẓim Imām, 2 vols. (Tehran: Dānīshgāh-i Tīhrān, 1959), 2:332; Dawlatshāh Samarqandī (d. 900/1494 or 913/1507), *Tadhkirat al-shu'arā'*, ed. Edward G. Browne (London: Luzac & Co., 1901), 136–37; and Muḥammad Mīrkhwānd (d. 903/1498), *Rawḣāt al-safā'*, ed. 'Abbās Zaryāb, 2 vols. (Tehran: Intishārāt-i 'ilmī, 1994), 2:1133–34.

34 On Khiyābān and in particular the area surrounding al-Rāzī's tomb, see Terry Allen, *Timurid Herat* (Wiesbaden: Dr. Ludwig Reichert Verlag, 1983), 18ff.; 32; *passim*; cf. Saljūqī, *Khiyābān*.

35 This is evident from topographic maps. See the map opposite; cf. Rubina K. Salikuddin, "Sufis, Saints, and Shrine: Piety in the Timurid Period, 1370–1507" (doctoral thesis, Harvard University, 2018), 223, where the elevation from Darb-i Malik, the north-western gate in the city wall, to al-Rāzī's tomb is estimated to be a mere 20m.



MAP      The location of al-Rāzī's tomb in Timurid Herat. Based on Allen, *Timurid Herat*, 94–96; id., *Catalogue*, 157–58.

Khiyābān.<sup>36</sup> This report thus stands as the sole contemporary evidence – indeed, the sole pre-Timurid evidence – for the location of al-Rāzī's tomb. It confirms that he was indeed buried in Khiyābān, where the tomb has been attested by our sources from Timurid times to the present; and we have no reason to contest that the present site is al-Rāzī's original burial place. Finally, because he was buried in the cemetery of Khiyābān at a location that remained known to later generations, and not on a remote hill or mountain, his death, funeral and burial are unlikely to have been concealed.

To sum up, we have concluded that neither of the two aforementioned instructions in al-Rāzī's testament concerning his funeral and burial – namely, that they should be concealed, and that he should be buried on a hill or mountain near the village of Mazdākhān – were carried out by his associates.<sup>37</sup> His funeral was conducted in public, and he was buried in Khiyābān.

#### 4 Al-Rāzī's Date of Birth

A further piece of information handed down to us in the obituary is al-Rāzī's date of birth: 25 Ramaḍān 544 (26 January 1150) (l. 23; tr. ll. 36–7). The sources previously available to us differ on whether he was born in the year 543 or 544.<sup>38</sup> Most only give the year, and only Ibn Khallikān (d. 681/1282) among al-Rāzī's early biographers provides an exact date, the same date given in the obituary. However, Ibn Khallikān does not identify his source. Some confirmation of this approximate date is afforded by a passage in the *Taf̄sīr*, where al-Rāzī states his age at the time of writing.<sup>39</sup> The obituary provides us with the earliest and by far most reliable witness for his date of birth.

36 Mohammad Atashinbar and Heshmatollah Motedayen, "Fading out the Sema[n]tic Dimension of Street in Iran (from the Ancient Times to Today) [sic.]," *Bagh-e Naẓar* (English edition) 15 (2019): 81. Yāqūt al-Ḥamawī pronounces the name as Khudhābān. *Muʿjam al-buldān* under the title *Jacut's Geographisches Wörterbuch*, ed. Ferdinand Wüstenfeld, 6 vols. (Leipzig: F.A. Brockhaus, 1866–73), 2:407. A large cemetery still existed in Khiyābān in Kartid and Timurid times. Allen, *Catalogue*, 166; *Timurid Herat*, 32; 96.

37 Another, minor apparent inconsistency is that in his will he instructs an unnamed person to act as a guardian for his children. *Waṣṣīyya*, in al-Zarkān, *Fakhr al-Dīn*, 642. In contrast, the author of the obituary reports that al-Rāzī was asked to name a guardian but refused to do so and instead entrusted his children to God (ll. 51–6; tr. ll. 80–8). There are several ways to account for this rather trivial inconsistency.

38 Year 543: Ibn al-Athīr, *Kāmil*, 12:190; Ibn al-Qiftī, *Tārīkh*, 292; Ibn al-Shaʿār, *Qalāʿid*, 5:84. Year 544: Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt*, 4:252; al-Ḥamawī, *Muʿjam al-buldān*, 6:2585.

39 Al-Rāzī, *al-Taf̄sīr al-kabīr*, 32 vols. (Cairo: al-Maṭbaʿa al-bahiyya, 1938), 18:145 (where he says that he had reached the age of fifty-seven); cf. al-Zarkān, *Fakhr al-Dīn*, 16. The passage

## 5 The Manuscript and Edition

The obituary is known to be transmitted in only one manuscript copy, which is housed at the Library of the Prophet's Mosque, ms Medina, al-Masjid al-Nabawī 30/900, fols. 39b–40a.<sup>40</sup> The text is appended to a copy of al-Rāzī's *Manāqib al-Imām al-Shāfiʿī* (fols. 1a–39b), and is followed by a copy of an advice text (*waṣīyya*) by his contemporary the Sufi Abū Ḥaṣṣ al-Suhrawardī (d. 632/1234) (fols. 40a–b). The copyist's colophon, appearing at the end of al-Suhrawardī's text, dates the completion of the copy to 14 Jumādā 1 938 (24 December 1531) and identifies the copyist as Aḥmad b. Aḥmad b. ʿAlī al-Bābilī al-Shāfiʿī, evidently a professional scribe based in Egypt.<sup>41</sup> The text is executed in a clear and elegant professional *naskh* hand, and is mostly dotted and partially vocalized.

The edited text has been modified in keeping with modern spelling conventions. Other emendations to the text are noted in the apparatus, and additions are inserted in square brackets.<sup>42</sup>

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is dated Rajab or early Shaʿbān 601 (March or early April 1205); cf. *Tafsīr*, 18:82; 18:229 (dated, respectively, Rajab 601 and 7 Shaʿbān 601).

40 Although this is the number given on the flyleaf and titlepage of the manuscript (fols. 1a; 1a), the library catalogue gives the number as 29/900. *Makhtūṭāt Maktabat al-masjid al-nabawī al-sharīf* (Medina: Maktabat al-Masjid al-nabawī al-sharīf, 2007), 717, no. 1661. The latter number appears on the flyleaf (fol. 1a), but is crossed out. The brief description provided in the catalogue mentions the obituary only in passing.

41 The *nisba* derives from the village of Bābil near Ṭanṭā in lower Egypt. Cf. Shams al-Dīn al-Bābilī al-Qāhirī, on whom see al-Muḥibbī, *Khulāṣat al-athar fī aʿyān al-qarn al-ḥādī ʿashar*, 4 vols. (Cairo: al-Maṭbaʿa al-wahbiyya, 1284 AH (1867–68), 4:39–42. The Egyptian link is confirmed by three further manuscripts signed by the same copyist: ms Istanbul, Yeni Cami 460 (a copy of Abū Bakr al-Ḥaddād, *al-Jawhara al-nayyira*), whose colophon states that the copy was commissioned by an official based in Egypt, fol. 292a; ms Cairo, Dār al-kutub wa-l-wathāʾiq al-qawmiyya 2128 (Ibn al-Humām, *Faṭḥ al-qadīr*), located in Egypt; ms Istanbul, Yeni Cami 483 (Taḳī al-Dīn al-Shummanī, *Sharḥ al-Niqāya*), a copy of a text written by a 9th/15th-century Egyptian author, which circulated principally in Egypt. Other manuscripts signed by the copyist include ms Istanbul, Nuruosmaniye 1037 (al-Nawawī, *al-Minhāj Sharḥ Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*), and ms Istanbul, Nuruosmaniye 1782 (al-Qudūrī, *Mukhtaṣar*). I have consulted all five manuscripts.

42 I am grateful to the anonymous referees for their comments, and to Narguess Farzad and Professor Mohammed Rustom for discussing aspects of the edited text with me. I alone am responsible for the contents of this article.

## 6 Timeline of the Last Two Years of al-Rāzī's Life

|                                                                                       |                                              |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------|
| The Khwārazmshāh lays siege to Herat after losing it to a local pro-Ghūrid rebellion. | 604 (1207–8)                                 |
| Al-Rāzī moves from Herat to Gurganj, Khwārazm.                                        | Shortly before 14 Shaʿbān 604 (4 March 1208) |
| Completion of <i>Risālat Dhamm al-ladhdhāt</i>                                        | 14 Shaʿbān 604 (4 March 1208)                |
| The Khwārazmshāh restores his control of Herat.                                       | 605 (1208)                                   |
| Completion of <i>Maʿālim uṣūl al-dīn</i>                                              | 7 Jumādā I 605 (17 November 1208)            |
| Beginning of a prolonged illness in Gurganj                                           | Rajab 605 (January 1209)                     |
| Return from Gurganj to Herat                                                          | Rajab 605 (January 1209)                     |
| Dictated the testament ( <i>waṣīyya</i> )                                             | 21 Muḥarram 606 (26 July 1209)               |
| Last lesson delivered                                                                 | 22 Shaʿbān 606 (19 February 1210)            |
| Sudden collapse in health                                                             | 27 Shaʿbān 606 (24 February 1210)            |
| Death                                                                                 | 1 Shawwāl 606 (29 March 1210)                |
| Funeral                                                                               | 2 Shawwāl 606 (30 March 1210)                |

Translation  
[Obituary for Our Master the Imām, He Who  
Summons to God, Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī]

In the name of God, the Merciful and Compassionate

Glory be to him who is uniquely eternal and immune from passing away and 5  
privation, and who provides through his boundless beneficence. He taught by  
the pen, taught humans what they did not know, and he is indeed most benefi-  
cent and high. He governs all things; none can hasten what he delays, nor delay  
what he hastens. None can overturn his decree, or thwart what he ordained.  
He knows all that has been and all that is yet to be, and his command when 10  
he wills something is simply to say to it ‘Be,’ and it is. Everything will perish  
except his face, for to him belongs the judgement, and you will be returned  
to him. None can prevent his decree from coming to pass, or repel his judge-  
ment, which he alone brings to pass. To him alone belong might and power,  
and sovereignty and kingdom. He bestowed endurance and eternality upon 15  
no other, decreeing that all but himself shall expire and perish. Praised be he  
beyond time and measure, and may the blessing and peace of God be upon  
Muḥammad, the seal of the prophets, and upon his family and companions.

Now then, I pray [God] to grant me the fortitude to endure the harrowing 20  
adversity and misfortune, so grievous that it would rend the earth or level  
mountains, which he decreed and brought to pass, concerning the affliction  
that befell the great imām, the pride of humanity, the most eloquent of Arabs  
and non-Arabs, the pride of the community and faith (Fakhr al-Milla wa-l-Dīn),  
the champion of Islam and Muslims, the heir of the prophets and messen- 25  
gers, the propagator of virtue on earth, the standard-bearer of guidance, the  
seal of mujtahids, the interpreter of the Book of the Lord of all beings, the sul-  
tan of scholars east and west, God’s proof to humanity, who protected religion  
from the contamination of unbelief and ignorance and purified Islam from the  
blemishes of innovation and misguidance, whose teachings on divinity illu- 30  
minated many a college and mosque pulpit, whose praises have filled countless  
pages, and whose perfection and glory are beyond expression, the most per-  
fect and blissful leader of the pious and the champion of the Commander of  
the Believers, He Who Summons to God, Abū ‘Abdallāh Muḥammad b. ‘Umar  
al-Rāzī, may God be pleased with him.

This dreadful calamity unfolded shortly before daybreak in the night of 35  
Wednesday, three nights before the end of Sha’bān in the year 606. His birth

was on the twenty-fifth of Ramaḍān in the year 544. Following this incident, he paid no heed to the counsel of physicians and disregarded the prescribed regimen. His reasons for doing so were his aversion to this-worldly life, his yearning  
 40 to attain the higher ranks and to join the exalted beings, and his profound desire to realize the highest goal and purest source, for he held an intense aversion to the bodily realm and great attraction to the spiritual realm. Not a day passed when he did not enjoin this upon anyone who sat with him, deeply moving his listeners, both learned and lay. I often heard him declare, "I detest  
 45 this ephemeral life and these corruptible frames."

It is related that an ascetic once visited him in his illness and, in a spontaneous moment, said, "Fear not!" So [al-Rāzī] berated and shouted at him saying, "Quiet, you fool! You are but a child, not yet having reached the stature of men. How do you say to someone like me not to fear death, when it is more welcome  
 50 to me than life!" He quickly became aware of his condition and reclined, while those present wept. He then recited:

I am not one to fear his own annihilation;  
                   for that half is more favorable to me than this half.  
 This soul of mine is on loan to me from the True One on high,  
 55               I will surrender it when the appointed hour calls.

He then recited:

A miserable man once saw a lover,  
                   beholding death and at once laughing in elation;  
 The onlooker questioned, "When life takes its leave,  
 60               from whence springs your laughter and glee?";  
 He answered, "When the beautiful ones lift the veils,  
                   this is how the lovers will die before them".

When he was done reciting, he apologized to the ascetic so as to soothe his heart. Indeed, he spoke the truth, for he beheld a [higher] world that neither  
 65 the preceding nor succeeding generations beheld, and witnessed what no earlier or later ones witnessed.

During his illness, he frequently turned to the exalted majesty of God, most high, with his heart absorbed in [God's] attributes of perfection, his thought focused on his vast glory, and his yearning to meet him intense.

The last lesson he delivered was on Friday, the twenty-second of Shaʿbān. He expounded upon the evidence of [God's] oneness and transcendence, affirming the principles [of theology] and refuting anthropomorphism, in a way that he had not articulated in previous lessons. It was as though his parting farewell to people, for he remarked that "if you find my words disagreeable, then I am leaving all of this and will not give you any more lessons after today." It was as he said, may God be pleased with him.

He often recited this during his illness:

O, you whose sovereign will over soul and frame none prevent,  
I bear witness, you're not begotten, nor do you beget.

When his illness intensified, someone suggested, "You should entrust your children's affairs to someone for their care." However, [al-Rāzī] turned aside from the speaker and said, "I would feel ashamed to turn in this matter to anyone other than God, exalted, or to seek assistance from anyone but him. When I was a child, as my father and teacher the Imām Ḍiyā' al-Dīn [al-Makkī], may God have mercy on him, was on his deathbed, he committed my affairs to God, most high, and placed his trust in his benevolence. I was consequently blessed with great fortune in my youth and old age. In a similar fashion, I commit the affairs of this child to God, most high, and place my reliance solely on him".

His illness persisted until the first day of Shawwāl, a Monday, when his condition further deteriorated. In the late afternoon, the veil was lifted for him, revealing the unseen world, unfolding the events of the hereafter, and granting him to witness the high rank and beatitude that awaited him. Several rushed to his side weeping. He opened his eyes and said, "Leave me; do not disturb me, for I am now peaceful and happy." They fell silent. He continued to invoke God, moving his lips [in silent prayer], until the sun turned yellow [in the lead-up to sunset]. At that moment, what [God] determined and decreed came to pass, and a calamity befell the Muslims. We belong to God and to him we shall return. He will not be questioned about what he does, whereas [humans] will be questioned.

No sooner had the subtle substance separated from the noble body, and had the soul, liberated from the body of elements, entered the realm of mercy of the Merciful than the day darkened and the heavens wept with rain. Muslims were plunged into disarray and distress, as though the earth in all its vastness closed

in around them. Eyes shed tears of blood, and hearts were consumed by the  
 105 flames of sorrow. The beacons of Islam dimmed, and the precepts of revelation  
 vanished in a haze. People were afflicted by a grave calamity that shrouded the  
 days in a cloak of darkness and obscured their vision in a somber mist, much  
 like a poet once described:

If by his absence, the nights were tormented,  
 110       The tears they'd shed would wash out the celestial glow;  
 And if from the cup of his absence, the days imbibed,  
       Their locks of onyx to silver strands would grow.

In the early morning of Tuesday, they carried him to the festival prayer  
 ground,<sup>43</sup> and a large group of people performed the [funeral] prayer over  
 115 him. It was just as he himself foretold, as he used to say upon returning to the  
 town [i.e. Herat]: “When I was in Khwārazm, I beseeched God, most high, to  
 grant me that I die on the soil of Herat and that a large group of its residents  
 pray over me.” It was as he said. He was buried beside his mother’s tomb in the  
 cemetery of Khudābān.

120 May God alleviate our suffering in this time of tribulation by granting us  
 his blessings, and bestow upon us the fortitude to endure. May God elevate  
 [al-Rāzī] to the rank of the righteous and blessed, welcoming him to the sacred  
 realm alongside the prophets and elect. May he sanctify that honorable resting  
 place, and bless his soul and body for all eternity. O God, by the exalted angels  
 125 and messengers, admit him among your devoted servants, and bestow your  
 blessings upon Muḥammad the seal of the prophets and the master of mes-  
 sengers. Praised be God the Lord of all beings.

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43     Literally, “open ground.” See p. 190 above.

## [وفاة مولانا الإمام الداعي إلى الله فخر الدين الرازي]

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

سبحان من تفرد بالأزلية والقدم، وتنزهه عن قبول الفناء والعدم، وتفضل بالجلود والكرم. علم بالقلم، علم الإنسان ما لم يعلم، إنه الجواد الأكرم والعلي الأعظم. الأمور كلها بيده، لا مقدم لما آخر ولا مؤخر لما قدم، لا راد لقضائه ولا دافع لما حكم، علم ما كان وما سيكون، وأمره إذا أراد شيئاً أن يقول له كن فيكون، كل شيء هالك إلا وجهه، له الحكم وإليه ترجعون. لا مردّ لنفاد قضائه ولا معقب لحكمه الذي تفرد بامضائه، وله العزة والجبروت وبيده الملك والملكوت، استأثر لنفسه البقاء والدوام، وحكم على غيره بالانقضاء والانصرام. أحده حمداً يتعالى عن التعديد والإحصاء ويبقى بعد انقضاء الصباح والمساء. وصلى الله على محمد خاتم الأنبياء وعلى آله وأصحابه وسلم تسليماً كثيراً.

أما بعد، فأسأله الصبر على ما حكم وأمضى وقدر وقضى من البلية الفظيعة والرزنة الفجيعة التي لو نزلت بالأرضين لتصدعت أو بالجبال الرواسي لتقطعت، بسبب العارضة التي عرضت للإمام المعظم مفخر بني آدم أفصح العرب والعجم، فخر الملة والدين، ناصر الإسلام والمسلمين، وارث الأنبياء والمرسلين، ناشر الفضل في الأرضين، علم الهدى خاتم المجتهدين، مفسر كتاب رب العالمين، سلطان علماء الشرق والغرب، حجة الله على الخلق، الذي حى مشاريع الشريعة عن شوائب الكفر والجهالة، ومحى عن شوارع الإسلام آثار البدعة والضلالة، تشرفت بأنوار توحيده المدارس والمنابر، وتزينت بذكر محامده الأوراق والدفاتر، عجزت عن شرح كماله أسنة الأقلام، وقصرت عن بيان جلاله أسنة الكلام، الواصل إلى الكلمات، المنتهي إلى جملة السعادات، إمام المتقين نصير أمير المؤمنين، الداعي إلى الله أي عبد الله محمد بن عمر الرازي رضوان الله عليه.

وكان حدوث تلك الداهية الدهيئة وقت السحر ليلة الأربعاء لثلاث<sup>1</sup> ليال بقين من شعبان سنة ٦٠٦. وكانت ولادته في الخامس والعشرين من رمضان سنة ٥٤٤. فلما حدثت<sup>2</sup> تلك الحادثة ما التفت إلى قول الأطباء وما احتى حق الاحتماء، كل ذلك سامةً عن الحياة الدنيا وطلباً للوصول إلى الدرجات العلى والحق بالملأ<sup>3</sup> الأعلى وشغفاً إلى الفوز بالمقصد الأقصى والمشرب الأصغى<sup>4</sup>، إذ كان شديد الكراهية للجسمانيات عظيم الرغبة إلى الروحانيات. وكان لا يرد<sup>4</sup> به يوم ولا جلس عنده قوم إلا ويجري عليه هذا الكلام بحيث يتأثر منه الخواص والعوام. وكثيراً ما سمعته يقول: "لا أحب هذه الحياة الفانية وهذه التراكيب<sup>5</sup> الفاسدة".

حُكي<sup>6</sup> أن واحداً من الزهاد دخل عليه عائداً فسبق إلى لسانه أن قال، "لا تخف". فزجره وصاح عليه وقال، "اسكت أيها الغافل، فإنك طفل ما بلغت مقام<sup>7</sup> الرجال! أتقول لمثلي لا تخف من الموت وهو راجح على الحياة عندي!" ثم ظهرت له حاله فرقد<sup>8</sup> وذرفت منها عيون الحاضرين. ثم أنشأ:

آن مرد نيم کز عدم بیم آید      کان نيم<sup>9</sup> مرا خوشتر از اين<sup>10</sup> نيم آيد  
جانيست مرا ز بود حق عاريتي      تسليم کنم چو وقت تسليم آيد

ثم أنشد:

|    |                |
|----|----------------|
| ١  | من +           |
| ٢  | حدث            |
| ٣  | والمشرف الاصغى |
| ٤  | Sic.           |
| ٥  | وهذا التركيب   |
| ٦  | حكي            |
| ٧  | بمقام          |
| ٨  | لرحاله فرقه؟   |
| ٩  | نمّه؟          |
| ١٠ | ين             |

عاشقی را<sup>11</sup> یکی فسرده<sup>12</sup> بدید  
گفت کاخر بوقت جان<sup>13</sup> دادن  
گفت خوبان چو پرده برگیرند  
که<sup>14</sup> همی مرد و خوش همی خندید  
چیست این خنده و خوش استادن  
عاشقان پیش شان چنین میرند

فلما سكت اعتذر عن الزاهد استماله<sup>15</sup> لقلبه. ولقد صدق فيما قال، إذ اطلع على عالم  
لم<sup>16</sup> يطلع عليه المتقدمون والمتأخرون، وشاهد<sup>17</sup> ما لم يشاهده الأولون والآخرون. 40

وكان في مرضه دائماً يتوجه إلى جناب جلال الله تعالى مستغرق [القلب] بصفات<sup>18</sup>  
كحاله كثير الفكر في بیداء كبريائه شديد التمني للوصول إلى لقاءه.

وكان آخر تذكيره يوم الجمعة الثاني والعشرين<sup>19</sup> من شعبان. جرى على لسانه من  
الكلمات المشتبهة على دلائل التوحيد والتنزيه وتقرير الأصول ونفي التشبيه ما لم يجر<sup>20</sup>  
في غيره من المجالس، وكأنه كان يودع الناس يومئذ. إذ كان يجري على لسانه، "إن لم  
يعجبكم هذا الكلام فإني تركت ذلك لا أذكركم بعد يومي هذا". وكان كما قال رضوان  
الله عليه.

وكان يقول في مرضه كثيراً:

يا نافذ الحكم في روجي وفي جسدي شهدت أنك لم تولد ولم تلد 50

|              |    |
|--------------|----|
| فرا          | 11 |
| فرده         | 12 |
| آخر بوقت حار | 13 |
| کو           | 14 |
| استماله      | 15 |
| لا           | 16 |
| وشاهده       | 17 |
| لصفات        | 18 |
| والعشرون     | 19 |
| يجز          | 20 |

ولما اشتد مرضه قيل له، "هل لا أوصيت إلى أحد في أمور أطفالك والقيام بمصالحهم<sup>21</sup>؟" فأعرض عن القائل وقال، "أستكشف أن ألتفت في هذا المقام إلى غير الله عز وجل، وأستحي أن ألتجئ إلى غيره. وإنّ والدي وأستاذي الإمام ضياء الدين رحمه الله لما حضرته<sup>22</sup> الوفاة في صغري فوّض أمري إلى الله تعالى واعتمد على فضله، فرأيت خيراً كثيراً في صغري وفي كبري. وأنا الآن أيضاً أفوض أمر هذا الطفل إلى الله تعالى ولا أعتمد على أحد سواه".

ثم تمادى مرضه إلى غرة شوال، وكان ذلك يوم الإثنين، فزاد ضعفه يومئذ. فلما دخل وقت العصر كشف عنه الغطاء وتجلّى له عالم الغيب وانكشف له منازل الآخرة وشاهد ما أعدّ له من الدرجات العلى والمنظر الأعلى. فحضره<sup>23</sup> جماعة يكون، ففتح عينيه وقال، "قوموا ولا تشوشوني، فإني الآن في إراحة ولذة"، فسكتوا. وكان يذكر الله تعالى 60 fol. 40a ويحرك شفّتيه إلى أن اصفرّت الشمس. فحينئذ نفذ الحكم والقضاء ونزل بالمسلمين البلاء. إنا لله وإنا إليه راجعون، لا يسأل عما يفعل وهم يسألون.

فلما انقطع التعلق بين الجوهر اللطيف والعنصر الشريف وتخلّص الروح عن بدن<sup>24</sup> العناصر والأركان واتصل بجوار رحمة الرحمن، اسودّ النهار وبكت السماء بالأمطار، وتغيرت أمور المسلمين واضطربت وضاعت عليهم الأرض بما رحبت، وامتلاّت 65 العيون بالدماء بدل الدموع وانقضّت النيران بين الأحشاء والضلوع، وأصبحت معالم الإسلام منطمسة النجوم ومناهج الشريعة مندرسة الرسوم، ونزل<sup>25</sup> بالعالمين من البلاء المبين ما لبس الأيام ثوب الظلام وصير الأجفان مثل الغمام، كما قال الشاعر:<sup>26</sup>

- لمصالحهم 21  
حضر له 22  
حضره 23  
بدن؟ 24  
نزلت 25  
والبيتان منسوبان إلى أبي بكر الدينوري الدقي (توفي 971/360) (ابن عسّكر، تاريخ دمشق، 438، 52).

لو أن الليالي عذبت بفراقه      محي دمعُ عين<sup>27</sup> الليل نورَ الكواكبِ  
ولو جُرِّعَ الأيامُ كأسَ فراقه      لأصبحت الأيامُ شهب الذوائبِ

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فلما<sup>28</sup> كان غداة يوم الثلاثاء حملوه<sup>29</sup> إلى الصحراء وصلت عليه جماعة عظيمة كما أخبر<sup>30</sup> في حياته عنه. كان يقول لما قدم البلدة، "إني دعوت الله تعالى في بلدة خوارزم أن يتوفاني<sup>31</sup> بأرض هراة وتصلي علي جماعة عظيمة من أهل هذه البلدة. وكان كما قال. ودُفن بجانب قبر أمه في مقبرة خدابان.

جبر الله هذه المصيبة بجزيل الأجر، ووقفنا على الاستعانة بالصبر. أنزله الله تعالى منازل الأبرار والسعداء، وأسكنه حظائر القدس مع الأنبياء والأولياء، وقدس تلك التربة والأرض المرضية، وصلى على روحه في الأرواح وجسده في الأجساد صلاة مستمرة دهر الداهرين وأبد الأبدن. اللهم اجعله في عبادك الصالحين بحق ملائكتك المقربين وأنبيائك المرسلين، وصل<sup>32</sup> على محمد خاتم النبيين وسيد المرسلين، والحمد لله رب العالمين.

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|          |    |
|----------|----|
| عيني     | 27 |
| لما      | 28 |
| حملوا    | 29 |
| أحر      | 30 |
| يتوفى به | 31 |
| وصلى     | 32 |

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