4

The Lexicon

When God spoke to the human race, his words indicated mental contents. Humans then tried, with the help of theologians and exegetes, to understand exactly what those mental contents were. When poets spoke to the human race, they did so with images and metaphors that made mental contents interact with each other, creating chain reactions of human cognition. Between God and the poets, these same reactions and connections between mental contents were the subject matter of logic, where they were manipulated by the Aristotelian syllogism. All the while, in a process that underpinned the language of God, the poets, and the logicians, the lexicographers wrote and curated dictionaries that mapped the connections between vocal forms (*alfāẓ*) and mental contents (*maʿānī*).

In this chapter, we will engage the lexical work and theory of ar-Rāġib and some of his contemporaries. Ar-Rāġib primarily worked in the linguistic disciplines of hermeneutics, lexicography, and poetics. In all of these places, the relationships of vocal forms to mental content were his primary concern. In the lexicon, which as we will see was much more than just a dictionary, there was nothing but the interaction between vocal form and mental content. The lexicon recorded and managed the connections between the two. Reading the lexicon also puts us in a position to understand two specific ways that vocal form and mental content connected with each other: pragmatics and nonliteral language. It is only by spending time with the lexicon, and the lexicographers who curated it, that we can understand what was at stake in discussing the intentions behind speech acts, and how those speech acts were understood to either follow some lexical precedent and be accurate (*ḥaqīqah*) or deviate from precedent and go beyond the lexicon (*maǧāz*).

The problem with hermeneutics is that it is always looking for a foundation. When one thinks about what things mean, where does one go to check one's conclusions? How can one prove, in an argument, that this interpretation is correct and that one is wrong? The answer in eleventh-century Arabic is the lexicon. It consisted of vocal forms that were connected to mental contents. Meaning was therefore always verifiable; one had only to return to the lexicon to establish what each vocal form indicated. The lexicon would always provide an account of an original connection between vocal form and mental content, a connection that was then the foundation for any subsequent hermeneutical work.

Then lexicon provides us with an account of its own constituent parts: vocal form and mental content. Ar-Rāġib defined *lafẓ* thus: "The 'vocal form' in speech is figuratively derived from the act of ejecting something from one's mouth or flour being discharged from a millstone."[1] He defined *maʿnā* thus: "The 'mental content' is what speech intends to communicate and that with which it is concerned."[2] As for speech (*al-kalām*), it was this pairing working in tandem: "The word 'speech' covers both the vocal forms when syntactically organized and the mental contents that lie beneath them."[3] Here we have the three components that make up the lexicon and that constitute the entirety of human speech: vocal forms, mental contents, and connections made between them. (Abū Sulaymān Ḥamd al-Ḫaṭṭābī, a contemporary of ar-Rāġib's, d. ca. 996, put the same trio into rhymed prose: *lafẓun ḥāmilun wa-maʿnā bi-hī qāʾimun wa-ribāṭun lahumā nāẓimun.*)[4] In the definitions ar-Rāġib provides for *lafẓ* and *maʿnā* we see two fundamental kinds of lexical statements. The first connects a vocal form to a mental content with a single statement: "mental content is what . . ." The second explains how a vocal form has come to mean something through a process of lexical development, in this case borrowing a vocal form originally connected to the acts of ejecting spittle from a mouth or flour from a millstone, and creation of a new use for that same vocal form to mean the ejecting of speech from the lips. Ar-Rāġib was prepared to argue for lexical connections from use and to give his own figurative explanations for those connections. He personified mental content and wrote that it was "the divulging of what the vocal form had encompassed."[5] He reported a popular etymology of

1. اللفظ بالكلام مستعارٌ من لفظ الشيء من الفم ولفظ الرحى الدقيق. Ar-Rāġib (1992, 743).

2. المعنى هو المقصود إليه من الكلام المهتمُّ به. ar-Rāġib (1988a, 178). I read المُهْتَمّ following three of the four manuscripts; only Chester Beatty has المبهم. ar-Rāġib (1280, fol. 12a.9), (1554, fol. 36b.29), (1680, fol. 61a.6), (n.d.[2], fol. 50b.2). *Pace* Key (2012, 111).

3. فالكلامُ يقع على الألفاظ المنظومة وعلى المعاني التي تحتها مجموعةً. Ar-Rāġib (1992, 722).

4. لفظٌ حاملٌ ومعنى به قائمٌ ورباطٌ لهما ناظم. "A vocal form that carries, a mental content that subsists in the vocal form, and a ligature that strings the two of them together": al-Ḫaṭṭābī (1959, 27.5–6).

5. والمعنى إظهارُ ما تضمَّنه اللفظ. Ar-Rāġib (1992, 351).

another word for speech (*nuṭq*) that related it to a belt or girdle (*niṭāq*) because "a vocal form is like a belt that surrounds and encompasses the mental content."[6] The role of the lexicographer is to regulate the connections between vocal form and mental content, provide their genealogies, manage their changing uses, and explain them to readers.

Arabic lexicography understood any connection between mental content and vocal form, between cognition and the physical existence of voice or writing, as a moment of "placing" (*waḍʿ*). This is the act of name giving or reference setting that is sometimes called "imposition" in Anglophone philosophy of language or was called "baptism" in European scholasticism: "Baptism, stripped of its religious connotations and understood as a pure naming ceremony, provides an excellent metaphor for the process by which, in the causal theory of reference, words are attached to things or sorts of things." (John Marenbon on the twelfth-century European philosopher Abelard.)[7] In Arabic, the source of the metaphor was more prosaic: the vocal forms had simply been "placed" or "put down" in the lexicon. I translate *waḍʿ* as "lexical placing," another uneasy neologism coined to reflect its epistemological independence from English. In the texts under consideration, therefore, vocal forms are lexically placed to communicate mental contents. Everyone writing about language in Arabic agreed that this was the operative process. There were disagreements, as we will see, about the exact history of this lexical placement and the degree of divine involvement, but all agreed that this was the structure within which language was created and existed.

The Arabic word for "lexicon" was *al-luġah,* often translated as "language" (and usually in modern Arabic used to mean just that). For eleventh-century Arabic a translation of *al-luġah* as "language" doesn't quite work. "Language" in English has to include the use human beings make of it. But the Arabic lexicon is the part of language that does not move during a conversation: humans refer to it for explanation and are limited by it when it comes to choice of expression; it is where one goes to determine meaning. When a scholar like ar-Rāġib or Ibn Fūrak says *al-luġah,* they mean this lexicon, they do not mean language. The centrality of this lexicon to eleventh-century Arabic theory cannot be overstated. It was foundational for grammar, legal theory, poetics, and all human and divine communication. Not everybody wanted to be restricted by it, and many of its curators were busy adapting it to circumstance, but everyone had to engage with it.

Where was this lexicon? It seems scarcely credible that it could be an actual book, but by the eleventh century that is exactly what scholars like ar-Rāġib and Ibn Fūrak thought the lexicon was. Their predecessors in Arabic scholarship had

6. وقيل حقيقةُ النُطق اللفظُ الذي هو كالنِطاق للمعنى في ضَمِّه وحَصْره. Ar-Rāġib (1992, 812).

7. Marenbon (2013, 156).

been producing Arabic-to-Arabic dictionaries since the eighth century and would continue to do so for another millennium at least. (See Ramzi Baalbaki and Tamás Iványi.)[8] These dictionaries were published books, available on the open market and written on the widely available medium of paper since the ninth century. They were all multivolume and comprehensive surveys of the entire language, and they were accompanied in the market by the separate genre of popular word lists on specific subjects like plants or particular animals (for an example, Larsen).[9] In an intellectual culture where memorization was praised as a scholarly faculty, this meant that authority was inevitably vested in the lexicographers who read the dictionaries to which they had access and then wrote their own, improved, extended versions. Ar-Rāġib was one such lexicographer, and although he did not claim that his dictionary was comprehensive beyond the vocabulary of the Quran, he could not resist including many words not found in revelation (like *maʿnā,* for example). In eleventh-century Arabic theory, hermeneutics had a physical foundation in the books on scholars' shelves.

PRINCIPLES (*AL-UṢŪL*)

Scholars in the eleventh century could look to the books on their shelves to find out what words meant, and therefore to understand what people and God intended. But their activity was more than just passive recourse; it was an active drive to produce more of the lexical reference that they were using, and thereby improve the stock of lexicography. (This is the sort of pun of which the lexicographers are fond: eleventh-century Arabic dictionary-writing both increased the number of available dictionaries in stock and raised the status, the stock, of the dictionary-writing endeavor.) It is important to remember how active this lexical drive to create meaning was, because the lexicon can appear static, and the rhetoric around its historical status stressed the conservative approach that lexicographers took to its modification. But when Arabic scholars were looking for meaning, they were creating meaning. There is no way to look at ar-Rāġib's Quranic glossary, or the dictionary of his contemporary Ibn Fāris (whom we met defining *maʿnā* in chapter 2.) other than as attempts to create meaning for the intellectual community. The primary way to do this was through statements about the origins of words and their morphological construction. The Arabic word here was *aṣl,* a root or root principle. Let us take the example of the word "lexicon" itself in Ibn Fāris's dictionary. We look it up under its morphological components, and we learn that the three core components (Arabic words are composed of ordered sets

8. Baalbaki (2014), Iványi (2015).

9. Ibn Ḥālawayh (2017).

of consonants; see Petr Zemánek)[10] of the word *luġah* are *l-ġ-w* and they have "two sound principles, the first of which indicates a thing that should not be counted, and the second indicates being addicted to a thing."[11]

Ibn Fāris goes on to explain, using the Quran and poetry (two of the paradigmatic lexical sources, the other being lexicographical fieldwork with nomadic native speakers), that the first of the two principles for *l-ġ-w* is "should not be counted" and that it plays out in usage as a failure to count members of a group of camels, or God not counting certain people as believers, or the error in perception when one sees someone approaching and initially gets their name wrong. The second principle, "being addicted to," is the source of the word *al-luġah,* and Ibn Fāris suggests an etymological process of derivation by which those who possess the Arabic lexicon are addicted to it, and it is thereby called "a quantity to which one is addicted."[12] A tone of conservative consistency must, by definition, run through all dictionaries, and Ibn Fāris's is no exception. But these principles were being built at the same time as they were being recorded in the eleventh century, and if we look to Ibn Fāris's contemporary the great grammarian and language theorist Ibn Ǧinnī, we read a very different lexical account of the same word for "lexicon." Ibn Ǧinnī's definition of the lexicon is: "The sounds with which all peoples express their aims . . . morphologically derived from the verb *laġā,* which means 'to speak.'"[13] Ibn Ǧinnī disagrees entirely with Ibn Fāris about the meaning of the verb from which they are agreed the word is morphologically derived. The substantial gap between "talking" and "addiction" should give the lie to any claim that eleventh-century lexicography was derivative rather than creative. At the same time, the tantalizing prospect of a semantic connection between "talking" and "addiction" should reinforce our understanding of Arabic lexicography as creative art. (It is worth noting in an aside that this art would reach fruition in 1855 when Aḥmad Fāris aš-Šidyāq published his novel dictionary *Kitāb as-Sāq ʿalā as-Sāq fī mā huwa al-Fāriyāq,* a book that joked about, criticized, praised, recaptured, and rewrote anew the Arabic lexicon.)[14]

A second answer to the question, "Where is the lexicon?" is that it is, of course, with God. He created the original lexicon (*aṣl al-luġah*), just as he created

10. Zemánek (2015).

11. اللامُ والغَين والحرف المعتلّ أصلان صحيحان أحدُهما يدلّ على الشيء لا يُعتدّ به والآخر على اللَهَج بالشيء. Ibn Fāris (1946–52, 5:255).

12. والثاني قولُهم لَغِيَ بالأمر إذا لَهِجَ به ويقال إنّ اشتقاق اللغة منه أي يلهَج صاحبُها بها. Ibn Fāris (1946–52, 5:356). Cf. Wright (1898, 1:175).

13. فإنها أصواتٌ يُعبّر بها كلُّ قوم عن أغراضهم .. فإنها فُعْلَةٌ من لَغَوْتَ أي تكلّمتَ. Ibn Ǧinnī (1952–56, 1:33.1–4).

14. Aš-Šidyāq (2013).

everything else. The Quran told ar-Rāġib, Ibn Fūrak, Ibn Fāris, Ibn Ǧinnī, and their predecessors and contemporaries that God taught all the names to Adam (Quran 2:31, al-Baqarah). There was an extended conversation among both lexicographers and theologians as to what form this teaching took. Did God teach the names (nouns) but not the verbs? Did he teach Adam certain names while language as such had actually been developed through convention, by humanity on its own? Did he teach Adam the *maʿānī,* as we saw al-Ǧāḥiẓ argue in chapter 2? I have edited and translated ar-Rāġib's position on this debate elsewhere[15] and will report only the conclusion to his discussion here: "God taught Adam all the names by teaching him the rules and principles to cover individual specifics and implementations. It is after all known that teaching the universals is a greater wonder and something closer to the divine than simply teaching a boy one letter after another."[16] Ar-Rāġib was at a critical epistemological moment here. With the existence of multiple human languages being an empirical fact, and with both the truth of the Quranic revelation and the monotheistic purity of the creator being articles of faith, ar-Rāġib had to provide an answer to the same question that vexed Plato in the *Cratylus:* Where does language come from? And at this critical moment ar-Rāġib made a rhetorical appeal to an epistemology of principles not instances, universals not particulars, and rules from which one could reason rather than examples that one had to repeat. This power of this appeal rested on an assumption that his readers were familiar with the vocabulary of both philhellenic logic and legal theory. Even though he was a lexicographer, ar-Rāġib thought that the principles behind a dictionary were more amazing than its entries.

Principles were simply more important. They underpinned all eleventh-century thought. (For the history of this methodological approach, see Endress.)[17] "Real accurate knowledge is knowledge of the principles that encompass applications and of the universal mental contents that comprise particulars. Examples of these mental contents include knowledge of the substance of the human being or of the horse." We are back to mental contents as the stuff of cognition here, and this mental content is what universal concepts are made of; *maʿnā* is the cognition of what we cannot see or touch ("horseness," for example). In the mind there are also "rules by which accurate accounts of things are known," which function as principles of multiplication in mathematics, dimension and quantity in geometry, and as principles of law, theology, and grammar. "Knowledge of particulars without knowledge

15. Key (2012, 123f).

16. فتعليمُ الله الأسماءَ كلَّها إعلامُه القوانينَ والأصولَ المشتمِلة على الجزئيات والفروع وقد عُلم أنّ تعليم الكُلّيّات أعْظمُ في العجوبة وأشْبَهُ بالأمور الإلهية مِن تعليمنا الصبيَّ الحرفَ بعد الحرف. Key (2012, 297), ar-Rāġib (n.d., fol. 36b.15–17).

17. Endress (2002, 244f).

of their principles is not knowledge."[18] It therefore had to be the case that God taught Adam the principles of language, rather than going through every individual word one-by-one. This reinforces my observation that the lexicon was a human creation, and specifically a creation for which the lexicographers understood themselves as responsible. What, exactly, were they building? They were building knowledge of the world that was accessed through language: "One knows a name only when one knows the thing named, and when one attains this knowledge in one's consciousness. The information there can be substance, accident, quantity, quality, relation, and other accidents, according to all of which the name of the thing can differ. A human being has to know these mental contents both cumulatively and separately in order to know names."[19] This is ar-Rāġib's answer to the question of what language is and how it works: lexicon and cognition take center stage.

When the lexicon and cognition take center stage, lexicographers find themselves right at the heart of the relationship between God and humanity. Let us take an example from Ibn Fūrak. At the start of the twentieth chapter of his book, on the subject of "capability," Ibn Fūrak wrote that humans can be described with lexical accuracy as having capability (albeit according to the doctrine of acquisition, on which see further below.) He then said that God's "ability" cannot be called "capability," because there is no precedent for this description in divine revelation. However, he continued, if one looks at the question from the perspective of mental content, then ability is the same mental content as capability, "and the lexicographers do not distinguish between these two mental contents, just as they do not distinguish between ability and potentiality, or between knowledge and cognition, or between movement and transfer."[20] Unlike Abū Hilāl, Ibn Fūrak believed that multiple vocal forms in language can refer to the same mental content. What is interesting about this discussion is that two opposing hermeneutical dynamics are in play at the same time.

18. والصحيحُ أن العِلم في الحقيقة يتعلّق بمعرفة الأصول المشتملة على الفروع والمعاني الكُلّية المُنْطَوِية على الأجزاء كمعرفة جوهرِ الإنسان والفَرَس والقوانين التي تُعرف بها حقيقةُ الشيء كأصول الضرْب في الحساب وأحوال الأبعاد والمقادير والهندسة والأصول المَبنيّة عليها المسائلُ الكثيرة في الفقه والكلام والنحو فأما معرفةُ الجزئية مُتعرّيةً عن الأصول فليس بعلم. Key (2012, 296–97), ar-Rāġib (n.d., fol. 36b.10–14).

19. فثَبتَ أن معرفة الاسم لا يُحصل إلا بمعرفة المسمّى في نفسه وحصولِ معرفته في الضمير ثم المعلومات قد تكون جواهرَ وأعراضاً من كَميّة وكيفية وإضافة وسائرَ ذلك من الأعراض ويُجعل للشيء الواحد اسامِيَ بحسب هذه النظرات فلا بد أنْ يكون الإنسانُ عارفاً بهذه المعاني مُجتمِعةً ومفترقةً حتى يكون عارفاً بالاسماء التي يُجعل لها بحسبها. Key (2012, 297–98), ar-Rāġib (n.d., fol. 37a.3–6).

20. وكان يقول إنّ الله تعالى لا تُسمَّى قُدرتُه استطاعةً لأجل أنّ التوقيف لم يرِد بذلك فأما مِن طريق المعنى فالذي له من القدرة هو بمعنى الاستطاعة وأهلُ اللغة لا يُفرّقون بين معنَيَيهما كما لايُفرّقون بين القُدرة والقوية وبين العلم والمعرفة وبين الحركة والنقل. Ibn Fūrak (1987, 108.2–5).

On the one hand, there is the claim that evidence of God's word choice, found in language that comes from God, is the way to decide what God meant. We cannot guess what God meant, and so we have to follow his precedent as found in the lexicon he provided. However, there is another reading in play here, which Ibn Fūrak calls "the mental-content route." If we go down the mental-content route, then we say that when we find "ability" in revelation, it has the same mental content as "capability," and we therefore do not have to follow divine precedent. What mental content does here is enable Ibn Fūrak to posit a hermeneutical space for which there is no divine evidence and in which he can exercise his own judgment as to what God's words mean. The lexicographers are equally important in both these dynamics; whether lexical accuracy relies on divine precedent or human reasoning, the lexicon is still the place that connects specific vocal forms to mental contents, thereby enabling us to understand what God meant.

Ar-Rāġib shared Ibn Fūrak's respect for divine precedent, stating on more than one occasion that it was the only proper way to determine the correct words to describe God,[21] but he did not collapse multiple vocal forms into the same mental content with the frequency of Ibn Fūrak. He was therefore closer to Abū Hilāl, whose project was intended to demonstrate the complete absence of synonymy in Arabic and included analyses of how those vocal forms adduced by Ibn Fūrak (ability and potentiality, knowledge and cognition) did in fact refer to different mental contents in each case.[22] On the pairing of ability and potentiality, ar-Rāġib was particularly scathing, reporting how a senior scholar refused to even say the word "potentiality" while exclaiming: "This expression is used by philosophers so instead I say 'ability'!" Ar-Rāġib was unimpressed with this attitude to the lexicon: "It was as if he didn't know the difference between the two words in common usage, never mind among specialists!"[23] Clearly, the lexicographers do not in any sense represent a single authoritative source. Ibn Fūrak used them to argue that multiple vocal forms had the same mental content, and ar-Rāġib and Abū Hilāl used them to argue that multiple vocal forms had different mental contents. The lexicon was equally important in each case. In effect, "the lexicographers" was shorthand for a prolonged and iterative lexical argument about meaning, in which eleventh-century scholars could pick and choose as they saw fit.

21. ذكر أهلُ الأثَر أنّ الله عزّ وجلّ لا يصح أنْ يُوصف إلا بما ورد السمعُ به . . . لا نَصِف اللهَ تعالى ولا نَصِف الأمورَ الإلهية إلا بما ورد به السمعُ. Key (2012, 77–80), ar-Rāġib (1988a, 79.13–14, 173.13–14).

22. الفرقُ بين العلم والقُدرة . . . الفرق بين القادر والقاوي. Abū Hilāl (2006, 93–94, 122).

23. وكأنه لم يعلم ما بينهما من الفرق في تعارف أعوام الناس فضلاً عن خواصهم. ar-Rāġib (2005b, 214).

INTENT

A theory of language that only has two components, vocal form and mental content, must account for the connections between them. Ar-Rāġib, his contemporaries, and his predecessors did this with intent. The idea that the intent of a speech act governed its meaning gained traction in European and Anglophone scholarship only in the twentieth century with the work of Paul Grice and J. L. Austin (and of course Wittgenstein). This gave subsequent theorists a set of new resources that they called "pragmatics." Kepa Korta and John Perry open their *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* entry on pragmatics with a quote from Voltaire: "When a diplomat says yes, he means perhaps; when he says perhaps, he means no.)[24] In the Arabic eleventh century, this was a well-established methodology. As we just saw with ar-Rāġib, one could intend either Zayd the person or Zayd the name while using the unchanged vocal form "Zayd." The connection between mental content and vocal forms was made by speakers' intent: people wanted to say things.[25] The theorizing of intent primarily took place in the discipline of legal theory, where in order to decide what speakers meant, the scholars had to account systematically for the intentions behind speech acts. This held for both God, whose commands in the Quran needed to be understood so that they could be followed, and for human beings themselves, whose contractual undertakings with each other needed to be codified so that they could be legislated. The secondary scholarship on legal theory is substantially more developed than in any other field of Classical Arabic language theory. Notable works are Mohammed M. Yunis Ali's synchronic analysis in *Medieval Islamic Pragmatics,* Robert Gleave's work on literalism, Joseph Lowry's study of the foundational monograph by the ninth-century aš-Šāfiʿī, Behnam Sadeghi's investigation of the frameworks in which laws were made, and David Vishanoff's diachronic survey of the jurisprudential responses to the question of what God meant.[26] This is how al-Ǧuwaynī (Imām al-Ḥaramyn, d. 1085: fl. in Nishapur and the teacher of al-Ġazālī) explained the relationship between law

24. Korta and Perry (2015).

25. أنّ المعنى إرادةُ كونِ القول على ما هو موضوعٌ له في أصل اللغة أو مجازها فهو في القول خاصّةٌ إلا أنْ يُستعار لغيره على ما ذكرنا قبل ولإرادةُ تكون في القول والفِعل. Abū Hilāl (2006, 143.20–21). And selections from passages already encountered:

. . . أنْ يكون زيدٌ في الحقيقة مراداً مع وجوده فدلّ . . . Abū Hilāl (2006, 45.18–19),

. . . ليس لدخولك إلى فلان معنى والمرادُ أنه ليس له فائدة تُقصَد ذكرَها بالقول . . . Abū Hilāl (2006, 45.21–22),

. . . لأنّ المعنى هو قصدُ القلب بالكلام إلى المراد . . . al-Qāḍī ʿAbd al-Ǧabbār (1965–74, 5:253.4–5),

. . . إلى كون ألفاظ اللغات سِمَاتٍ لتلك المعاني وكونِها مُرادةً بها . . . al-Ǧurǧānī (1992a, 540.14–541.1).

26. Ali (2000), Gleave (2012), Lowry (2007), Sadeghi (2013, esp. 24, 37–38), Vishanoff (2011).

and language: "Most of the work in legal theory deals with vocal forms and mental contents. Mental contents are dealt with as part of legal analogy. A concern with vocal forms is indispensable, for the divine revelation is in Arabic. . . . Legal theorists have a particular focus on those aspects of language that are not dealt with by lexicographers and grammarians. Legal theorists focus on bringing out the divine law, and they work on commands, prohibitions, statements of general versus particular applicability, and questions of exceptions from rules."[27]

The lexicon provided a framework for the divination of intent. How could one know what language users meant when they used a vocal form if not by reference to precedent and a history of usage in the speech community that was recorded by the lexicographers? The same is of course true of the quotation from Voltaire: only a history of usage can allow us to make sense of the idea that a diplomat might say "yes" and mean "perhaps." And yet that lexical precedent would almost never provide a single unimpeachable answer. In Arabic, there was always room to posit another meaning, perhaps a rarer meaning, which, as long as some lexical evidence was presented, could be made to stand up in argument with one's peers. The reason for this flexibility was the assumption that intent was how language functioned. The intent of a speaker was always an integral part of the model of signification, its third term or copula. For ar-Rāġib, the definition of mental content itself *was* intent: "Mental content is what speech intends to communicate and that with which it is concerned . . . contained as intent beneath the vocal form."[28] With a vocal form, a speaker intended a mental content, while the lexicon both restricted and registered their choice.

NAME, NAMED, AND NAMING *(ISM, MUSAMMĀ, TASMIYAH)*

There was a fraught exegetical and theological debate about the status of name, named, and naming that had started in the eighth century.[29] Ibn Fūrak reports that a group of theologians with whom al-Aš'arī had disagreed held that "the name is the thing named."[30] It was a statement that seems either counterintuitive or wildly

27. اعلمْ أنّ مُعظم الكلام في الأصول يتعلق بالألفاظ والمعاني أما المعاني فستأتي في كتاب القياس إنْ شاء الله تعالى وأما الألفاظ فلا بُد مِن الاعتناء بها فإنّ الشريعة عربيةٌ . . . واعتنوا في فنّهم بما أغْفلَه أئمةُ العربية واشتدَّ اعتناؤُهم بذكرِ ما اجتمع فيه إغفالُ أئمةِ اللسان وظهورُ مَقصد الشرع وهذا كالكلام على الأوامر والنواهي والعُموم والخُصوص وقضايا الاستثناء. Al-Ǧuwaynī (1979, 1:169.3–5, 10–12). Cf. translation in Miller forthcoming in the Journal of Abbasid Studies, and Cf. Vishanoff (2011, 116–20).

28. المعنى هو المقصود إليه من الكلام المُهْتَمُّ به . . . وقيل هو المُحتوَى تحت اللفظ مِن المقصود إليه. Ar-Rāġib (1988a, 178.2–4). See note 2 above.

29. Cf. al-Aš'arī (1929–33, 529.14–17).

30. مَن ذَهَبَ مِن أصحاب الصِفات إلى أنّ الاسم هو المسمى. Ibn Fūrak (1987, 39.1–2).

simplistic. It was an example of how problematic it was to do either hermeneutics or language theory without a stable conceptual vocabulary for reference and signification. Such a conceptual vocabulary was, of course, always available in the combination of vocal form and mental content. But in this particular debate, we are at a point in the early history of the archive when that structural assumption, which I have been arguing was everywhere, was not yet omnipresent. We are dealing with a theological debate that in the eleventh century must have seemed conceptually anachronistic. This is the context for Ibn Fūrak's reference, in a book full of careful delineations of reference and meaning, to an apparently simplistic theory in which "the name is the thing named." Let us now go back and reconstruct the debate with interpretative charity and brevity. (It has been dealt with in detail in the secondary literature.)[31]

The issue at hand is the relationship between linguistic acts of description of God, God's own revealed descriptions of himself and their ontological status, and the nature of God's divine self. In one of the earliest extant exegeses of the Quran, Abū ʿUbaydah (d. ca. 825) wrote that "in 'the name of God' is actually just 'in God' because the name of the thing is the thing in reality." Abū ʿUbaydah then referred to a poet from the time of the Quranic revelation (Labīd, d. 661) who used the referential function of language as an image: "The name of peace is upon them."[32] Abū ʿUbaydah's point was that Arabic speakers' primary and natural use of language was to refer to things, not to refer to words. When the poet said, "The name of peace is upon them," he did not mean that some linguistic act was floating above the people in question; he meant that they were actually in reality at peace. If a ninth-century exegete needed to make this apparently obvious point about how language works, we can infer that questions were being asked along the lines of, "What is the status of the 'name' in the Quranic phrase 'in the name of God' [the *basmalah*]? Is it separate from God himself? Is this something like the Christian Trinity?"

One initial theological response was to stress that language was completely separate from existence and that the fact that God has names means not that names exist alongside him but rather that human beings use names to describe his eternal divinity. This was the position of the Muʿtazilah, that the human use of a name (*tasmiyah*) can be distinguished from the thing named, that this use is the name, and that there is no other thing involved.[33] We read ʿAbd al-Ǧabbār in the eleventh century affecting shock at the naivety of the earlier statements and suggesting that the claim "the name is the thing named" stemmed from a

31. Brodersen (2014, 583–92), Frank (1982, 272–74), Gimaret (1990, 345–56), Massignon (1982, 3:172–76), Peters (1976, 377), van Ess (1991–95, 4:201–2, 628).

32. بسم الله إنما هو بالله لأنّ اسم الشيء هو الشيءُ بعينه قال لبيدٌ إِلَى ٱلحَوْلِ ثُمَّ ٱسْمُ ٱلسَّلامِ عَلَيْكُما. Abū ʿUbaydah (1954, 1:16).

33. وأنّ التسمية هي الاسم. Al-Ašʿarī (1929–33, 529.14), Frank (1978, 18).

desire to avoid the existence of a created Quran on earth, which containing God's name as it did would imply that God himself was created. "This is obviously false, because God is not literally *in* the Quran!" exclaimed ʿAbd al-Ǧabbār; what is in the Quran is our linguistic statement of his name.[34] The problem with reading this debate is that neither side, fighting as they are polemical battles over right belief, is prepared to give the other side its due. All we can do is read the violent shifts in perspective between lines of analysis assuming the statement "God has a name" refers to two separate physical things and lines of analysis assuming "God has a name" to be tautology because the word "God" is itself a name. Shifting back away from ʿAbd al-Ǧabbār to the original worry about the ontological status of names, we can read Abū Saʿīd ad-Dārimī (d. 894) writing with an apparently equal degree of shock and incomprehension that the problem with the Muʿtazilī position was that it implied God was a nameless person, unknown, with no idea who he was, until he created humans, they started talking about him in their language, and then they lent him a human name.[35] Outrageous! In the late tenth century, al-Bāqillānī agreed with ad-Dārimī and returned to the line of poetry that Abū ʿUbaydah had cited (noting that "lexicographers are the foundation stone!") to ask how the name (*ism*) could be the act of naming (*tasmiyah*) when the lexicographers had already said the poet didn't intend that a speech-act-of-naming-peace be upon those people, but rather that they just be at peace![36] I think that the shifts in perspective here in this debate are so extreme because it is language and its relationship to reality that is at stake. The analysis leaps from the world to the sounds and marks of linguistic activity without any intermediary, and this is what made it so unstable a conversation for both the Classical Arabic scholars taking part in it and for the twentieth-century scholars trying to read it. The missing intermediary is the mind. If a conceptual vocabulary is available that can clarify the relationship between things, ideas, and words, then the argument about how exactly they relate can take place more easily. It is exactly that role that we see *maʿnā* playing in other debates. The names-versus-named debate was an early and rare moment of fundamental confusion, and it throws into sharp relief the absence of such confusion in games that used the word *maʿnā*. It is also more than possible that scholars such as ad-Dārimī and al-Bāqillānī were not so much

34. وهذا ظاهرُ السقوط لأنّ القرآن ليس فيه الله في الحقيقة وإنما فيه قولُنا اللهُ الذي هو منظومٌ من حروف. Al-Qāḍī ʿAbd al-Ǧabbār (1965–74, 7:164.12–13).

35. يَعنِي أنّ الله كان مَجهولاً كَشخْصٍ مجهولٍ لا يُهتدى لاسمه ولا يُدرى ما هو حتى خَلق الخلقَ فابتدعوا له أسماءً مِن مَخلوقِ كلامِهم فأعارُوها إيّاه مِن غير أنْ يُعرف له اسمٌ قَبل الخلق. Ad-Dārimī (2007, 280.20–23).

36. أَهْلَ اللغة الذين هم العُمدةُ . . . فكيف يكون الاسمُ هو التسمية التي هي قولُ المُسَمِّي وهُم قد جَعلوا نفسَ المسمَّى وإنْ كان شخصاً أو عَرَضاً هو الاسمُ. . . . Al-Bāqillānī (1957, 227.17–228.4).

confused as deliberately misinterpreting their theological opponents; not quite the "this stuff wasn't really meant to make sense" of Frank's interlocutor but certainly evidence of a lack of interpretative charity that may also have been present in the debate's earlier centuries.[37]

Indeed, what happened in subsequent generations was that the debate about the name and the named became a byword for the sort of theological confusion that scholars sought to avoid. In twelfth-century Baghdad, Ibn al-Ǧawzī (d. 1200) was a preacher, intellectual, and director of five madrasas. In his heresiographical polemic *The Deceit of Satan,* he attacked theology in the same way as we saw ar-Rāġib do over a century earlier and (while attributing the sentiment to the great ninth-century jurist Muḥammad b. Idrīs aš-Šāfiʿī, d. 820) wrote that "if you hear someone saying that the name is the named, or is not the named, then bear witness that he is a theologian and has no religion."[38] An alternative voice from the twelfth century, the even more famous al-Ġazālī, did not share Ibn al-Ǧawzī's rejection of theology and therefore had to take the opposite approach to the complex of problems around the name and the named. Al-Ġazālī's monograph, probably written around the year 1100, is an explanation of the mental contents of God's names.[39] The first chapter starts with the mental content of the name, the named, and the naming. The way to uncover the accurate accounts of this matter, wrote al-Ġazālī, is to distinguish the mental content of each vocal form and to recognize that things exist in three ways: as physical entities in the world, as language on the tongue, and as knowledge in the mind. He also wrote that one needed to deal with the mental content of the copula itself (what was meant by "is" in "the name *is* the named).[40] This is exactly the epistemological menu required to make sense of the matter at hand, and it was these ingredients that were absent in the earlier theological debates. Al-Ġazālī's intellectual debts to ar-Rāġib, and to Ibn Sīnā, have been established elsewhere,[41] and it should suffice to note here that the recognition of the importance of the copula comes from the Aristotelian tradition via Ibn Sīnā, and the foregrounding of mental content as an epistemological tool for both divine reality and human language comes from the eleventh-century language theory

37. See chapter 3 note 42.

38. قال وإذا سمِعْتَ الرجلَ يقول الاسمُ هو المسمَّى أو غيرُ المسمَّى فاشهَدْ أنه مِن أهل الكلام ولا دينَ له. Ibn al-Ǧawzī (1983, 81.2–3), van Ess (1966, 319).

39. Al-Ġazālī (1986, xv).

40. الفصلُ الأوّل في بيانِ معنى الاسم والمسمَّى والتسمية . . . ولا سبيلَ إلى كشْف الحقّ فيه إلا ببيان معنى كلّ واحدٍ من هذه الألفاظ الثلاثة مفرداً ثم بيان معنى قولِنا هو هو ومعنى هو غيرُه فهذا منهج الكشف للحقائق . . . إنّ للأشياء وجوداً في الأعيان ووجوداً في اللسان ووجوداً في الأذهان. Al-Ġazālī (1986, 17.2, 17.13–16, 18.8–9).

41. Janssens (2003), Madelung (1974).

exemplified by Ibn Fūrak and ar-Rāġib. I do not wish to argue that the conceptual vocabulary of mental content caused al-Ġazālī to make better analytical assessments of questions like the name and the named, but rather that *maʿnā,* mental content, was part of a conceptual vocabulary that enabled him to do so. The degree to which it enabled scholars to theorize can be seen from the pained arguments that took place in its absence.

Ar-Rāġib decided to take part in that conversation at the traditional trigger point of the first verse of the Quran and the *basmalah* invocation ("In the name of God, the merciful, the beneficent") that both was used before ritual recitation and is found in the Quranic text itself. Ibn Fūrak, on the other hand, decided to address the conversation as a foundation for his complete analysis of the divine attributes, and he split the difference between the two arguing sides reviewed above.[42] He disagreed with the statement that the name was the named, and he also disagreed with the statement that the name was just the use of the name. Ibn Fūrak wanted to preserve the separation of God from his divine attributes while at the same time maintaining a sphere in which those same attributes could exist unconnected to human language. The problem with the Muʿtazilī position was that (as ad-Dārimī had shown) it implied God was dependent on humanity; if human language was all that mattered (and the Muʿtazilah tended to assume language was a human convention),[43] then God's divine knowledge or ability became dependent on human beings' ability to name him as knowing or able. Ibn Fūrak's formulation was that "every use of the name is a name, but every name is not a use of the name."[44] This meant that God had divine attributes that could be named by humans but that these attributes also existed without reference to humans.

Ar-Rāġib dealt with the *basmalah* at the start of the Quran and quoted Abū ʿUbaydah and the line of poetry from Labīd approvingly. He equated the use of the name with the name itself, saying that "name" in this supplicative formulation was in effect functioning as a *maṣdar* (quasi-verbal event noun) and so "the name" and "the use of the name" were the same (not an inevitable lexical statement; cf. Abū Hilāl).[45] With regard to the theological argument about God's divine attributes, ar-Rāġib split the difference using a technique different from Ibn Fūrak's. He wrote that the two opposing sides were both right "from different perspectives." It was simply a matter of intent. One could say, "I saw Zayd" and thereby refer to the

42. اعْلَمْ أنّا قدّمْنا لك ذِكر هذا الفصل لنَبْنِيَ عليه ما بعدَه مِن ذِكر مذاهبه في معنى أسماء الله تعالى وصِفاته. Ibn Fūrak (1987, 38.15–16).

43. Peters (1976, 387).

44. لأنّ التسمية عنده اسمٌ للمسمَّى وما عداها أيضا اسمٌ . . . مذهبُه أنّ كلّ تسميةٍ اسمٌ وليس كلّ اسمٍ تسمية. Ibn Fūrak (1987, 38.21–22, 39.4–5).

45. واسمٌ هاهنا مَوضوعٌ موضعَ المصدر أي التسمية. Abū Hilāl (2006, 40.3–41.3), ar-Rāġib (1984, 110.7).

actual named person Zayd, or one could say, "I called my son 'Zayd'" and thereby refer to the name itself in language. This leads to the existence of homonymous phrases such as "Zayd is beautiful," which can refer to either the name or to the person, depending on intent. Ar-Rāġib noted that there are a great many errors made with such statements.[46]

ACCURACY AND BEYOND (*ḤAQĪQAH* AND *MAĞĀZ*)

Connections between vocal forms and mental contents were recorded as precedent in the lexicon and that lexicon was then used and managed. Scholars such as ar-Rāġib made sense of the vastness of the lexicon by theorizing the existence of certain principles that structured it, and they made sense of actual language use by focusing on the intent behind specific speech acts. But the most important value applied to the lexicon was accuracy (*ḥaqīqah*), the conception of which was closely tied to the lexicon itself. It was accompanied by its twin and opposite, the process of going beyond the lexicon (*maǧāz*), which had its own epistemological and aesthetic value. *Ḥaqīqah* was always used to describe a process that was accurate, correct, real, and true. To provide the *ḥaqīqah* of something was to provide an accurate account of it, and this was a value that not everyone could necessarily access. When God showed Adam to the angels, they were unable to access the accurate accounts of the names. "We know only what you taught us" say the angels to God (Quran 2:32), but Adam, God's newly embodied language-capable creation, knew the names, their accurate accounts, and the principles with which to manage them.[47] He was the first lexicographer. Names in language were the way that things made their way into the heads of humans and angels alike, and when the accuracy of the resultant mental contents was at stake, ar-Rāġib used the word *ḥaqīqah*. If things that were coming into people's heads were speech acts or written words, then *ḥaqīqah* was used for a specific kind of accuracy that relied entirely on the lexicon.

This reliance took the form of a specific act of lexical placement that made a connection between a vocal form and a mental content, a connection deemed to be accurate by the lexicographers, who recorded it in the lexicon. There was consequently always a claim of consensus inherent in the use of *ḥaqīqah* as a value; the assumption was that if something was *ḥaqīqah* then everyone would agree

46. وما ذُكِر من الخلاف في أنّ الاسم هو المسمَّى أو غيرُه فقولانِ قالوهما بنظرين مختلفين وكِلاهما صحيحٌ بنَظَرٍ ونَظَر. Ar-Rāġib (1984, 110–11, 111.2–3).

47. وجُلُّ ذلك معدومٌ [من آيا صوفيا وفي جار الله معلوم وهو تصحيف] في المَلَك لعدْمِها كثافةُ الجسم المركَّب من الأمشاج واستغنايها [كذا] عن ذلك فبيّن اللهُ تعليمَه آدمَ هذه المعاني والأسامي وعَرْضَهم على الملايكة [كذا] وأنباءَ آدمَ بحقائقها . . . Ar-Rāġib (n.d., fol. 27a.14–15), (n.d.[3]). See note 16 above.

on it were they to have full access to the facts. This is why the *ḥaqīqah* connections in the lexicon were called *aṣl al-luġah;* the lexicon comprised only of accurate lexical placements was called "original" (*aṣl*) because it was a paradigm and a starting point. Ibn Fūrak wrote that there were certain fundamental truths that were necessarily known by all living things sufficiently endowed with senses and reason, and that if disagreement were to be permitted in these cases it would lead to mutual ignorance of the *ḥaqāʾiq;* mutual ignorance in the face of available accurate accounts was a contradiction in terms that proved the impossibility of disagreement about *ḥaqīqah.*[48] Any use of the word *ḥaqīqah* can therefore be read as a scholar making a claim for an accurate account of world or lexicon with which no one would disagree.

Ḥaqīqah was about truth and accuracy, but at the same time it was about a certain kind of linguistic truth and accuracy that consisted solely of lexical placing and precedent. Eleventh-century scholars used both kinds of accuracy to read texts produced either by God or by the poets and to play with the relationship between language and truth. The lexicographers noticed the gap between lexical truth and real truth. Ar-Rāġib explained *ḥaqīqah* as a word used to describe actual existence, deserved purview, true belief, sincere action, and speech that is neither lax nor exaggerated.[49] In all these cases *ḥaqīqah* was used for an accurate account of some truth that exists in the mind or in the world. Ar-Rāġib then went on to identify a language-facing usage of *ḥaqīqah* that was the specific terminology of the jurists and theologians,[50] one that he himself would later use in his own poetics: vocal forms used according to their original lexical placement.[51]

Abū Hilāl, on the other hand, maintained that *ḥaqīqah* was primarily a description of lexically accurate language and then secondarily, by the process of semantic extension we met above with *maʿnā,* a description of accuracy with regard to ideas and things.[52] He also made some very meticulous observations about the potential use of a language-based account of accuracy to describe nonlinguistic things

48. وأما في الضروريات التي تقع ابتداءً فلا يصح فيها أيضا إلا المشاركةُ بين الأحياء وذوي الحوّاس والعُقلاء مع زوال الآفات وإنّ إجازةَ خلافِ ذلك تُؤدي إلى تناكُر الحقائق وإبطال الطُرق إلى إثباتها. Ibn Fūrak (1987, 16.22–17.2).

49. والحقيقةُ تُستعمَل تارةً في الشيء الذي له ثباتٌ ووجودٌ . . . وتارةً تُستعمَل في الاعتقاد . . . وتارةً في العمل وفي القول . . . لقوله حقيقةٌ إذا لم يكن مُترخِّصاً ومُتزيِّداً. Ar-Rāġib (1992, 247/2.8–16).

50. وأما في تعارُف الفقهاء والمتكلمين فهي اللفظُ المستعمَل فيما وُضِع له في أصل اللغة. Ar-Rāġib (1992).

51. فالحقيقةُ اللفظُ المستعمَلُ فيما وُضِعَ له في أصل اللغة. Ar-Rāġib (ca. 14th C., fol. 4a.8–9).

52. والحقيقةُ أيضاً مِن قَبيل القول على ما ذكرنا وليستْ الذاتُ كذلك .. وتُوسَّعُ في الحقيقة ما لم تُوسَّعْ في المعنى فقيل لا شيءَ إلا وله حقيقةٌ ولا يقال لا شيءَ إلا وله معنىً ويقولون حقيقةُ الحركة كذا ولا يقولون معنى الحركة كذا. Abū Hilāl (2006, 45.22–24).

in the mind or in the world. First of all, he identified the truth-neutrality of the lexicon itself: "*Ḥaqīqah* is a speech act that is used according to its lexical place in the original lexicon, regardless of its good or bad qualities, whereas truth [*ḥaqq*] is what is used according to its place as judged by wisdom; it can therefore be only good." The process of verification (*taḥqīq,* which we briefly encountered above),[53] applies to both kinds of truth; accuracy with regard to "something being placed according to its place in either the lexicon or with regard to wisdom."[54] The foundation for ethics was wisdom, the ability to judge whether a thing was bad or good. The foundation for meaning, on the other hand, was lexical placement according to the stipulation of the lexicon. But accuracy was paramount in both cases.

Abū Hilāl thought that language was separate from reality. He wrote that *ḥaqīqah* was a quality of speech acts, but that essence (*ḏāt*) was not.[55] The proof that *ḥaqīqah* was a linguistic quality was that it necessitated the existence of *maǧāz.* The existence of accurate lexical connections necessitated the existence of other lexical connections that were not accurate in the same way. If one can use a vocal form according to its placement in the original lexicon, one can also use the same vocal form to go beyond that original placement, say something new, and generate a revised lexicon. This is the foundational concept of *maǧāz,* language that goes beyond the lexicon. Neither God nor the poets could speak without it. And *maǧāz* was, according to both Abū Hilāl and ar-Rāġib,[56] primarily linguistic. If *maǧāz* and *ḥaqīqah* were dependent on each other, and if *maǧāz* was linguistic, then Abū Hilāl argued that *ḥaqīqah* had to be linguistic too. This meant that things that were considered *ḥaqīqah,* things that were accurately accounted for as essences, could also be called *maǧāz.*[57] What did Abū Hilāl mean by that? It almost comes across as a throw-away remark in a passage where he is trying to explain that "logical definition" (*al-ḥadd*) and "accurate account" (*al-ḥaqīqah*) are not synonymous. But I think it is in fact a very meticulous observation about the boundary between language and the world.

53. See chapter 1 note 75.

54. الفرقُ بين الحقيقة والحقّ أن الحقيقة ما وُضِعَ مِن القول مَوضِعَه في أصل اللغة حَسَناً كان أو قبيحاً والحقُّ ما وُضِعَ مَوضِعَه مِن الحِكمة فلا يكون إلا حَسَناً وإنما شَمَلَهما اسمُ التحقيق لاشتراكهما في وَضْع الشيء منهما مَوضِعَه من اللغة والحكمة. Abū Hilāl (2006, 45.5–8).

55. والحقيقةُ أيضاً من قَبيل القول على ما ذكرنا وليست الذات كذلك. Abū Hilāl (2006, 45.3).

56. المجازُ اللفظُ المُستعمَل في غيرِ ما وُضِع له في أصل اللغة . . . والمجازُ من الكلام ما تَجاوَز مَوضِعَه الذي وُضِعَ له والحقيقةُ ما لم يتَجاوَز ذلك. Ar-Rāġib (1992, 211/2.25—212/1.2), (ca. 14th C., fol. 4a.9).

57. والحقيقةُ ما وُضِع من القول مَوضِعَه في أصل اللغة والشاهدُ أنها مقتضيَةُ المجاز وليس المجازُ إلا قولاً فلا يَجوز أنْ يكون ما يُناقِضه إلا قولاً ومِثلُ ذلك الصِدقُ لمّا كان قولاً كان ناقِضُه وهو الكِذبُ قولاً ثم يُسمَّى ما يُعبَّر عنه بالحقيقة وهو الذاتُ حقيقةً مجازاً. Abū Hilāl (2006, 44.6–9).

If we try and use a common example of language that goes beyond the lexicon, one that ar-Rāġib used in his poetics, the situation becomes clearer.[58] If you call an actual donkey "a donkey," then you are using the vocal form "donkey" with lexical accuracy, according to its precedent in the original lexicon. But if you call a stupid human being "donkey" you are going beyond the lexicon and using the vocal form "donkey" in a new way. This is how *ḥaqīqah* and *mağāz* are used as categories for language. But because *ḥaqīqah* can also be used to describe an accurate account of something in the world or the mind (either via semantic extension as per Abū Hilāl or as its primary usage as per ar-Rāġib), then the vocal form "donkey" when used to identify a stupid person is still pointing at some accurate conception of a donkey. What Abū Hilāl seems to have noticed here is that going beyond the lexicon requires keeping the original accurate lexical placement in play. This is exactly the insight that al-Ǧurǧānī would, as we will see, develop into a comprehensive theory of literary meaning. And the scale of *mağāz,* the extent to which language was able to go beyond the lexicon, cannot be underestimated. These scholars were relentless in their resort to the lexicon at the same time as they accepted a picture of ordinary language, technical and scientific language, divine language, and literary language in which usage went beyond the lexicon at all times and in every direction.

God and the poets both went beyond the lexicon. The Quran self-identified as an unparalleled literary event. Neither poetry nor make-believe, it was inimitable. And the scholarly response was to enumerate, taxonomize, and explain how this was so. Abū ʿUbaydah, the same highly regarded lexicographer whom we met above on the question of the name and the named, gave his exegesis the title *Mağāz al-Qurʾān* (*Going Beyond in the Quran*). The question of *mağāz* in Classical Arabic has received serious scholarly attention from Heinrichs and John Wansborough,[59] although work remains to be done. Heinrichs is the most persuasive, and he identifies *mağāz* in Abū ʿUbaydah as "a deep structure which materializes into two different surface structures equivalent to each other. [The two structures on the surface are the Quranic text and its *mağāz* paraphrase as provided by Abū ʿUbaydah.]"[60] This fits with how I have been trying to explain the accurate lexical account and usage that goes beyond it as two different epistemological accounts of language. Either language accords with the lexicon, or someone has made it deviate. What is interesting about Abū ʿUbaydah's work is that he is the one doing the deviation. God expressed content in an Arabic language that was immediately accessible to its original audience, the seventh-century Arabic speak-

58. كقولك حِمارٌ للبليد. Ar-Rāġib (ca. 14th C., fol. 4b.1).

59. Heinrichs (1984, esp. 137), (1991/92), (2016); Wansborough (1970).

60. Heinrichs (1984, 126).

ers of what is now Saudi Arabia. But for the audience of Abū ʿUbaydah, the grandson of a Persian Jew from Azerbaijan living in the new garrison city of Basra in Iraq,[61] the rare words, syntax, and brevity of the Quranic text needed explanation. So he wrote an exegesis that took each example of abbreviation, elision, or suppression of syntactical elements and made it deviate into a new, more accessible set of vocal forms.[62] For example, his opening example was the Quranic phrase "and their leaders came out; go and be patient" (Quran 38:6, Ṣād), which he explained as "and their leaders came out recommending to each other, or calling to each other, that they go and be patient."[63] This longer, clearer, version is Abu ʿUbaydah's *mağāz,* his deviation (or "going beyond") in vocal form while maintaining God's mental content.

Going beyond the lexicon is therefore not necessarily less accurate; we are not dealing with a situation in which there is truth (good!) and deviation (bad!). Instead we are dealing, as Heinrichs said, with different surface structures. These different surface structures had stable names that existed as a pair: *ḥaqīqah* and *mağāz* were defined, understood, and used together.[64] When they were used as a pair, it is clear to the reader that the two accounts of language structure that they described were interrelated. As we saw, Abū Hilāl used the fact of their interrelation to explain the meaning of *ḥaqīqah.* The question is whether this interrelationship still applied when the two terms were used separately. When Abū ʿUbaydah, Ibn Fūrak, or ar-Rāġib used *mağāz* or *ḥaqīqah,* did they do so with the assumption that all language was either one or the other? If so, what would be the *mağāz* version of a *ḥaqīqah* account of the extramental world? Can the translations "going beyond the lexicon" and "accurate account" be maintained? The reading I would like to advance is parallel to my reading of *maʿnā.* Just as I think *maʿnā* is best understood as "mental content," the stuff of cognition that can always potentially be expressed in vocal form, so I think that it is productive to read *ḥaqīqah* and *mağāz* as stable and mutually interdependent terms even in each other's absence. Although Abū ʿUbaydah never uses the word *ḥaqīqah* in his exegesis, it would not have been unrealistic for him to associate the Quranic text that he was deviating from with accuracy and correctness. *Mağāz* is therefore what moves away from

61. Weipert (2007).

62. فلمْ يحتجّ السلفُ .. أنْ يسألوا عن معانيه لأنهم كانوا عربَ الألْسُن .. وفي القرآن مِثل ما في كلام العرب من وُجوه الإعراب ومن الغريب والمعاني . . . ومِن مجازِ ما حُذِف وفيه مُضمَر. Abū ʿUbaydah (1954, 1:8.3–5, 6–7, 14).

63. ومِن المحتمل مِن مجازِ ما اختصَر وفيه مُضمرٌ قال وانطلَقَ الملأُ مِنهم أنْ امْشوا واصْبروا فهذا مختصَرٌ فيه ضميرٌ مجازُه وانطلق الملأُ منهم ثمّ اختصَر إلى فِعلهم وأضمَر فيه وتواصَوا أنْ امْشوا وتنادَوا أنْ امْشوا أو نحوَ ذلك. Abū ʿUbaydah (1954, 1:8.8–11).

64. Heinrichs (2016, 256).

some original and lexically validated literal, albeit without necessarily losing truth along the way. In a separate work, doing exegesis on poetry rather than revelation, Abū ʿUbaydah used the term *ḥaqīqah* to talk about a world of actual events that were reported in language. The poetry under consideration was from the famous Umayyad poet al-Farazdaq (d. ca. 728) and the line read:[65]

Do they offer vain threats?
Their impotent snakes have been seen.
It is a deadly serpent that bites and kills them.

Abū ʿUbaydah's lexicographical gloss for the verb "to make vain threats" was "mutual boasting without accuracy." The boast was inaccurate because it did not conform to a real world in which threats are made good upon. The threats were not real, and the poet had chosen to use a word that reflected a lack of accurate connection between speech and the world: al-Farazdaq's targets weren't "boasting"; they were "faking it."

For ar-Rāġib, the category of "going beyond the lexicon" is what happens when there is any deviation at all from the original lexical connection between vocal form and mental content. This could be anything from a complex metaphor to a dialect variation in pronunciation. The line above from al-Farazdaq, in which threats are impotent snakes, is quite clearly a departure from the lexicon, because vocal forms such as "snake" are not being used solely to describe animals in nature. A change of vowel pronunciation in certain dialects, however (such as moving from "love" to "luv" in English), is also going beyond the lexicon and moving away from the original act of placement.[66] This last example of vowel change should give readers a clue that what we have here with *maǧāz* is not a rejection of the lexicon or a call for its replacement with a realm of inexactitude. Instead, language that went beyond the original lexicon had now become part of a current one; this was one of the primary ways in which the lexicographers managed language change and development. They managed by enforcing restraint; in the lexicon the weight of precedent was heavy. All languages need rules based on the past, but at the same time languages need to adjust to changing circumstances and develop. This change could come from God, who altered the meaning of the word "prayer" when he stipulated the required prayers in his revelations, or from humans. In the eleventh century ar-Rāġib was well aware, as Abū ʿUbaydah had been in the ninth, that he was

65. أَيُفايِشُونَ وَقَدْ رَأَوْا حُفَّاثَهُمْ | قَدْ عَضَّهُ فَقَضَى عَلَيْهِ الأَشْجَعُ || قولُه أَيُفايِشُونَ قال المُفايَشَةُ المُفاخَرَةُ بلا حقيقةٍ. Abū ʿUbaydah (1998, 2:291.11–12).

66. الكلامُ ضرْبانِ حقيقةٌ ومجازٌ فالحقيقةُ اللفظُ المستعمَلُ في ما وُضِع له في أصل اللغة . . . [الحقيقةُ] اللفظُ المستعمَلُ في ما وُضِع له في أصل اللغة من غيرِ نَقْلٍ ولا زِيادةٍ ولا نُقصانٍ والمجازُ على عكسٍ من ذلك . . . . فالمجازُ في المفردات .. نحوَ أَنْظُرْ في أَنْظُر Ar-Rāġib (1984, 56.6–10), (ca. 14th C., fol. 4a.7–9).

no longer living in the speech community of the nomadic Bedouin, from whose pre-Islamic history of lexical precedent the first dictionaries had been collected. Ar-Rāġib remarked on this process of language evolution at multiple points in his Quranic glossary, using the word for "metaphor" (*istiʿārah,* a metaphor in which content is borrowed from a source). His dictionary sought to read God as having taken phrases from a nomadic lifestyle and turned them into language for a new community. The word *rawāḥ* ("afternoon passage") was borrowed from the rest (*rāḥah*) humans would take, or allow their camels to take, in the middle of the day.[67] The "abundant" (*midrāran*) rain had its lexical root in "milk" (*darr, dirrah*), and was one of the metaphors that borrowed the names and qualities of camels.[68] The verb "to pasture" came from the name of a thornless tree (*sarḥ*) that one fed to one's camel, and then every act of sending the camel to pasture came to have the same name. The verb "to release" in the Quran was borrowed from this pasturing of the camel, in just the same way as the word for "divorce" was borrowed from the setting-free of the camel.[69]

There is no question that what we are reading here is a theory of, and a taxonomical accounting for, language change that ascribes the changes to metaphorical usage. This was not unique to ar-Rāġib; over a century earlier al-Ǧāḥiẓ had used several of the same examples to explain that "if goaded, language will grow branches, and if its root principle is fixed, its arts will multiply and its pathways will broaden."[70] The process of language change had not stopped with the Quran in the seventh century, for the process of coining technical terminology required new word meanings that the lexicographers then had to record and curate: vocal forms "that specialists in any given discipline transfer from the initial conventional mental content to a different mental content of which only they are cognizant, so the vocal form in question remains shared between two mental contents. Vocal forms from divine revelation such as 'prayer' and 'tax' are examples of this process, as are the vocal forms which the jurists, theologians, and grammarians use."[71] All these new connections are, of course, departures from the lexicon. They are *maǧāz.*

67. وٱستُعيرَ الرواحُ للوقْت الذي يُراه الإنسانُ فيه مِن نِفس النهارِ ومنه قيل أَرَحْنا إبِلَنا. Quran 34:12 (Sabāʾ). Ar-Rāġib (1992, 371/1.4–6).

68. مِدْراراً وأصْلُه مِن دَرّ والدِرّة أيْ اللبْن ويُستعار للمطر استعارةَ أسماء البَعير وأوْصافه. Quran 6:6 (al-Anʿām), 11:52 (Hūd), 71:11 (Nūḥ). Ar-Rāġib (1992, 310/1.15–17).

69. السَرْحُ شَجَرٌ له ثمرٌ . . . وسَرَّحْتُ الإبلَ أصلُه أنْ تُرْعِيَهُ السرحَ ثم جُعِل لكلّ إرسالٍ في الرعْي . . . . وقوله وَسَرِّحُوهُنَّ سَراحاً جَميلاً مستعارٌ من تسريحِ الأبل Quran 33:49 (al-Aḥzāb). Ar-Rāġib (1992, 406/1.21–/2.1–2,7–10).

70. والكلامُ إذا حُرِّكَ تَشعَّبَ وإذا ثُبِتَ أصلُه كَثُرتْ فنونُه واتَّسَعَتْ طُرُقُه. Al-Ǧāḥiẓ (1965a, 3:341.19–20), Miller (2016b, 64f, 75). The translation is mine.

71. هو الذي يَنقله أهلُ صناعةٍ ما عن المعنى المصطلَح عليه أوّلاً إلى معنىً آخرَ قد تفرّدوا بمعرفته فيَبقى

Departure from the lexicon is therefore not a route away from the truth or from accuracy. It could hardly be so when scholars actively used such departures to create new, more accurate and specialized technical terminology for their discipline of choice. What does this imply for the original accurate lexical connections? The most important implication is that the original lexical connection may not always be the best connection to make. This is true for hermeneutics and it is true for poetics. The accounts of literary innovation and eloquence that we will deal with in chapter 7, on al-Ǧurǧānī (I have dealt with ar-Rāġib's poetics elsewhere),[72] all rest on the breakdown of the accurate lexical connection between vocal form and mental content, and its replacement with a series of increasingly complex moves within mental contents themselves. When it came to hermeneutics the rewards were similar: "Some people pursue and demand accurate accounts in those verses where God uses analogy. They think that if the mental content in question doesn't have an accurate account then it is a lie."[73] Ar-Rāġib disagreed, because analogy could go beyond the lexicon and was central to all communication, including God's communication. It was also inherently valuable: "The analogy is the noblest vocal form because of the beauty of its comparison and syntax, and its brevity. The analogy is also the noblest mental content because it indicates both primary intent and subsequent connected intent, so it is a complete indication, not a partial one. It is oblique rather than straightforward, and there is a subtlety in oblique communication; it is the noblest level that speakers can attain."[74] When God compared paradise to a garden with rivers beneath it he was not using language according to the original lexicon, but he was using language effectively.

The combination of an accurate account of the world according to lexical precedent with the ability of speakers to go beyond that original lexicon gave language the potential to communicate more than the world and gave scholars like ar-Rāġib the ability to do poetics, hermeneutics, and philosophy at the same time. Mental content was at the heart of all three. An account of the world that was accurate was necessarily cognitive, and therefore was made up of mental content. An accurate reading of the language of others needed to identify their intent, which was their mental content, and then move it into one's own mind using the lexicon

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من بعد مشترَكاً بين المَعْنِيَين وعلى ذلك الألفاظُ الشريعةُ نحو الصلاة والزكاة والألفاظُ التي يَستعملها الفقهاءُ والمتكلمون والنحويون. Ar-Rāġib (1984, 33.5–7).

72. Key (2012, 121f, 172f).

73. وبعضُ الناس تحرَّوا في آياتٍ ذكرها اللهُ تعالى على سبيل المَثَل تطلُّبَ الحقائق ورأَوا أنّ ذلك المعنى إذا لم يكن له وجودٌ على الحقيقة كان كِذباً. Ar-Rāġib (1984, 58.4–5).

74. فإنْ قيل فما الفائدةُ في العدول إلى المثل قيل المثلُ أشرفُ لفظاً لِما فيه من الصيغة في حُسن التشبيه والنظم واختصارِ اللفظ وأشرفُ معنىً لدلالته عل المقصود إليه وعلى غيره مما يُشاركه فدلالتُه دلالةٌ كلّيةٌ لا جزئيةٌ وتعريضٌ لا تصريحٌ وفي التعريض تلطّفٌ وهو أشرفُ منزلةٍ للمخاطبين. Ar-Rāġib (1988a, 183).

as a reference point. Poetics was about deliberately destabilizing that lexical reference point and equally about managing the degree of stability that remained. In all three spheres the taxonomical and theoretical activity of the scholars was indispensable. Someone had to write the accounts of mental content. Ar-Rāġib spent countless pages doing so. But the lexicographers were not the conservative recorders of Orientalist stereotype. As we have seen with Abū Hilāl and ar-Rāġib, they were prepared to follow their conceptual vocabulary and its linguistic origins into the thickets of the relationship between language, mind, and reality.