A Linguistic Frame of Mind: ar-Rāġib al-I#fahānī and What It Meant to be Ambiguous

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Abstract

The mediaeval Islamicate world was dominated by a language-obsessed culture that placed great value on words and their meanings. These words and meanings could, for those who used them, make the difference between both earthly success or failure, and salvation or damnation in the hereafter. Scholars were also conscious of the contingency of the links between words and their meanings, and the potential this created for ambiguity. This dissertation is about the mechanisms, models, and assumptions those scholars used to manage linguistic ambiguity. My investigation focuses on ar-Rāġib al-Iṣfahānī (fl. ≤ 409/1018), one such language-obsessed scholar. I provide a comprehensive review of his life, works, and times. He put together a portfolio of intellectual positions in exegesis, theology, ethics, and poetics that was guided by a philosophy of language which accepted and negotiated linguistic ambiguity. Underpinning that philosophy was a theory of meaning that used the pairing of expression and idea (*lafẓ* and *maʿnā*) to deal with polysemy, the intent of the speaker, and the function of the lexicon. Ar-Rāġib's philosophy was emblematic of what I call the Arabic Language Tradition, the shared assumptions of which constituted an indigenous philosophy of language that was able to supply its own answers to the central questions of linguistics and then use those answers across all of the genres encompassed by its scholarship, from grammar to poetics, law, and theology. It was an Arabic Language Tradition that is best understood through comparison to an alternative Classical Language Tradition that had its roots in the *Organon* and a theory of meaning with little space for ambiguity. Re-telling Islamic intellectual history through the lens of language in this way shows us that in addition to the well-known and oft-studied Islamic engagement with Hellenistic philosophy there was another, indigenous, tradition with its own answers to the problems of mediaeval scholarship. This Arabic Language Tradition saw in language a solution to these problems, rather than seeing language as just another hurdle to be overcome.

CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The responsibility for the mistakes in this dissertation is entirely mine, but were it not for the support of friends, family, colleagues, and mentors I would not have had the opportunity to make them. Indeed, were it not for the correction and guidance of a large number of people, the mistakes would have been far more numerous.

I would like to give credit to a small number of people, for a mention of all the scholars whom I have consulted and from whom I have benefited during this dissertation and throughout my academic career would be too long, and I would be benefiting more by association with them than they with me.

Professor Wolfhart Heinrichs, my advisor, took a chance on letting me into Harvard's Ph.D. programme, and has supported and guided me and my work ever since. The influence of his ideas and methodologies can, I hope, be seen here. Professor Julia Bray, who taught me my first words of Arabic and later my first mediaeval texts, is the reason that I am in this field. This dissertation is, to a certain extent, the result of her initial act of inspiration. Elias Muhanna, soon to be a professor, has been the best fellow graduate student one could wish for. As the other half of the Arabic and Islamic Studies Class of 2012, I have been following his professional example throughout my time at Harvard. Joyce Song was my partner before I started at Harvard, and she has been inspiring me with her love and support ever since. I would not be where I am today without her.

Professor Heinrichs, Elias, and Joyce have also read the words that follow and they join a group of readers each of whom has had a substantial impact on the text. My father Geoffrey Key, my advisors Professors Roy Mottahedeh and Khaled El-Rouayheb, Professor Peter Adamson, my colleague Avigail Noy, and my friend John Osborne all deserve my thanks.

in memoriam Elizabeth Key

1. INTRODUCTION

Ambiguity

Linguistic ambiguities, and the obsession with language from which they spring, have long been recognised as a prominent characteristic of mediaeval Islamicate intellectual culture. Richard M. Frank wrote that in "no culture, perhaps, has speech and the eloquent use of language been so praised and admired or the language itself more cherished and studied".[1] This observation was updated by James Montgomery with a list of eighteen intellectual disciplines ranging from law to poetry that show a "fascination (or: fixation) with speech".[2]

The obsession with language[3] was accompanied by an awareness that language was inescapably imprecise. European scholars were aware of this back in 1954, when in the first

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[1] Richard M. Frank, *Beings and their attributes: the teaching of the Basrian school of the Muʿtazila in the classical period* (Albany State University of New York Press, 1978). 9.

[2] The full list:

> At the very heart of the manifold, complex and shifting responses to the Qurʾān which we identify (and frequently distort) as characteristic of the Islam of the first two ʿAbbāsid centuries, beats a fascination (or: fixation) with speech: speech as divine (the Qurʾ ān); speech as revealed law (the Sharīʿ a); speech as prophetic exemplar (the Ḥadīth); speech as God's special gift to the Arabs and their Prophet (*ʿarabiyya*); speech as creedal declaration (*shahāda*); speech as deontology (*al-amr bi-l-maʿrūf*); speech codified as grammar (*naḥw*); and lexicography (*lugha*); speech as reasoned (*nuṭq*); and logical (*manṭiq*); speech as dialectic, eristics and speculative science (*kalām*); speech as doctrine (*maqāla*); and oration (*khuṭba*); speech as utterances threaded together as a poem (*qawl manẓūm*); or scattered untrammelled by rhyme or rhythm as prose (*qawl manthūr*); speech as the cooing of doves [rhymed] (*sajʿ*); speech as translation (*naql*, occasionally *tafsīr*); speech as rhetoric (*khaṭāba*).

James E. Montgomery, "Speech and Nature: al-Jāhiz, *Kitāb al-Bayān wa-l-Tabyīn*, 2.175-207, Part 1," *Middle Eastern Literatures* 11, no. 2 (2008): 170. It is a moot point whether the intellectual culture cared so much about language as a result of the Quran, or whether the Quran became intellectually central because the culture cared so much about language.

[3] It was a culture obsessed with language, but perhaps not quite "logocentric" (pace Montgomery, ibid.). The intellectual culture was obsessed with all words from a plurality of speakers more than it was obsessed with a single logos, even if that single logos were to be the Quran. Islamic scripture is also not quite what Jacques Derrida had in mind when he coined the word *logocentrisme* for the single shared logos, inevitably and naturally expressed in sounds, that he accused everyone "from the pre-Socratics to Heidegger" of being fixated with: "ce logocentrisme qui est aussi un phonocentrisme" (that logocentrism that is also a phonocentrism). NB: the link between Derrida's *logocentrisme* and Islamicate intellectual culture was perhaps first made by Mohammed Arkoun. Jacques Derrida,

edition of the journal *Arabica* Louis Massignon observed that Arabic was more the "*langue des Aḍdād*" than it was the "*langue du Ḍād*", a pithy remark that played on the indigenous tradition that the phoneme *ḍād* was unique to the Arabic language, and on the apparent prevalence in Arabic of words with two opposite meanings (*aḍdād*).[4] The article on linguistic structures in which he made this observation about ambiguity was a catalyst for a 1967 collection edited by Jean-Paul Charnay entitled *L'Ambivalence dans la culture arabe*. In its introduction Charnay wrote that it appeared paradoxical to base one of the great cultures of humanity on a notion that appeared to negate the great Hellenic principles of identity and causality, which had enabled modern civilisation to reason on the basis of evidence from reality.[5] Although the contributions to Charnay's collection demonstrated that words with two opposite meanings are no more common in Arabic than in French,[6] and broadened the analysis of ambiguity to include the genres of legal disputes (*iḫtilāf*), dialectics, and mysticism, Charnay had nevertheless highlighted

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De la grammatologie (Paris: Les Éditions de Minuit, 1967). 11, 23. ———, *Of Grammatology*, trans. Gaytari Chakravorty Spivak (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998). 3, 11, cf. lxviii; Carool Kersten, "From Braudel to Derrida: Mohammed Arkoun's Rethinking of Islam and Religion," *Middle East Journal of Culture and Communication* 4(2011): 7.

[4] Louis Massignon, "Réflexions sur la structure primitive de l'analyse grammaticale en arabe," *Arabica* 1, no. 1 (1954): 13 [11]. The letter *ḍād* is thought to have been "a lateral or lateralized velarized voiced interdental fricative", which would indeed have made it "a unique sound among the world's languages". Kees Versteegh, "Ḍād," in *Encyclopedia of Arabic Language and Linguistics Online Edition*, ed. Kees Versteegh, Lutz Edzard, and Rudolf de Jong (Brill Online: Brill, 2010).

[5] Charnay's argument reads:
> Il peut sembler paradoxal d'axer l'une des grandes cultures de l'humanité sur une notion – l'ambivalence – apparemment négatrice des grands principes d'identité et de causalité issus de l'hellénisme, repris sous des angles différents par Descartes, les rationalistes du XVIIIᵉ siècle et les dialecticiens du XIXᵉ siècle, et qui ont fondé l'essor de la civilisation moderne par adéquation entre les modes de raisonnement et la nature physique ou sociale.

Jean Paul Charnay, ed. *L'Ambivalence dans la culture arabe* (Paris: Éditions Anthropos, 1967), 9.

[6] An analysis supported by G. Weil, "Aḍdād," in *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*, ed. P. Bearman, Th. Bianquis, C.E. Bosworth, E. van Donzel, and W.P. Heinrichs (Brill Online: Brill, 2010). Cf. Lidia Bettini, "Ḍidd," in *Encyclopedia of Arabic Language and Linguistics Online Edition*, ed. Kees Versteegh, Lutz Edzard, and Rudolf de Jong (Brill Online: Brill, 2010).

a key aspect of the foreignness of mediaeval Islamicate intellectual culture from a European perspective: it appears to be particularly tolerant of ambiguity.

In *Die Kultur der Ambiguität: Eine andere Geschichte des Islams*, Thomas Bauer notes that mediaeval Islamicate scholarship often still offers the best theoretical presentation of verbal ambiguity available, before going on to address language as just one of a number of types of cultural agency that can be evaluated against an ideal of *Ambiguitätstoleranz* that he hopes can be useful for Europeans, Muslims, and European Muslims today.[7] It is likely that the difference between Charnay's discomfort with ambiguity and Bauer's celebration of it reflects philosophical developments in European scholarship in the later decades of the twentieth century. We have, thanks to Michel Foucault, Richard Rorty, and many others, as well as substantial recourse to the ironies laid out by Friedrich Nietzsche, become more comfortable with ambiguity and commensurately less comfortable with certainty. Revealingly, Bauer bookends *Die Kultur der Ambiguität* with a quotation from the Nobel Prize winning physicist Max Born (1882-1970) that says absolute certainty and the belief in a single attainable reality are at the root of the world's evils.[8] In this dissertation, however, I am dealing with a different time and a different place. There was no mediaeval Islamicate discussion of whether absolute certainty existed, comparable to the debates that informed Born, Charnay, and Bauer. Instead, there were a series of methodological disagreements about how best to attain certainty. This dissertation focuses on disagreements about the role language played in that process.

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[7] Thomas Bauer, *Die Kultur der Ambiguität: Eine andere Geschichte des Islams* (Berlin: Verlag der Weltreligion, 2011). 13, 16-17, 405. (*The Culture of Ambiguity: an alternative history of Islam*). *Ambiguitätstoleranz* (tolerance of ambiguity) is a concept from psychology that Bauer says has not yet found its place in the social sciences. Ibid., 13.

[8] "Ich glaube, daβ Ideen wie absolute Richtigkeit, absolute Genauigkeit, endgültige Wahrheit usw. Hirngespinste sind … Ist doch der Glaube an eine einzige Wahrheit und deren Besitzer zu sein, die tiefste Wurzel allen Übels auf der Welt." Max Born. *Von der Verantwortung des Naturwissenschaftlers* (translated into English as *My Life and My Views*), Munich, 1965, p.183. Quoted in ibid., 15, 405.

Linguistic Structures

I argue that the various instances of linguistic ambiguity, such as the *aḍdād*, are all products of the relationship between expression (*lafẓ*) and idea (*maʿnā*), and that it is only by starting one's investigation with this basic pairing that one can come to understand the different ways in which mediaeval Arabic-language scholars engaged with and negotiated ambiguity. I also argue that just as Charnay and Bauer differentiated between the European and Islamicate traditions' attitudes to ambiguity, there are two separate traditions within mediaeval Islamicate scholarship that accepted the framework of expression and idea while disagreeing on its relevance to their goals. The Arabic Language Tradition exemplified by ar-Rāġib al-Iṣfahānī (henceforth anglicized as "Ragib") chose to focus on language and manipulate the relationships between expressions and ideas in order to solve many of the problems of divine revelation, human speech, and reality. The Classical Language Tradition rejected such obsession with language in favour of the pursuit of a reality made up of supra-linguistic ideas. These contrasting philosophical approaches to language resulted in two very different attitudes to its potential for ambiguity; the Arabic Language Tradition was comfortable with the prospect, and the Classical Language Tradition was not.

The Arabic and Classical Language Traditions may have disagreed about ambiguity but they tended to share the assumption that expression and idea constituted the primary conceptual vocabulary for the interaction of language, mind, and reality. The pairing of expression and idea (*lafẓ* and *maʿnā*) therefore stands at the very center of this dissertation, which in fact began life as an enquiry into the functions performed by these two terms in the work of Ragib, his contemporaries, and the preceding generations. Now if we step away from the Arabic-speaking world for a moment to ask what "expression" and "idea" mean, the answer is that they are simply

two levels of linguistic structure. Expression (*lafẓ*) and idea (*maʿnā*) are the names used in Arabic for the two core elements of linguistics:

> linguists over the years have made a strong case for distinguishing at least two levels of structure: one that will interface with the morphology and the phonology of the language to yield the surface form of sentences [i.e. *lafẓ*], and another that will interface with other conceptual components of the mind to yield the meaning of sentences [i.e. *maʿnā*].[9]

The pairing of expression and idea was ubiquitous in Arabic-language mediaeval scholarship. All the authors I am dealing with simply assumed that these two concepts were part of the fabric of language and reality. Terminological alternatives were very rarely countenanced.[10]

The ubiquity of the pairing of expression and idea means that it has attracted substantial attention from scholars of mediaeval Arabic, and their works have given us a clear and informative picture of the range of ways in which these two words were used. Frank's article investigating the concept of *maʿnā*, which he usually translates as "meaning", reflects a paradigmatic philological approach. It is a detailed enquiry into the word's meaning in the specific genre and context of pre-eleventh-century Arabic grammar.[11] The first important

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[9] Cedric Boeckx, *Linguistic Minimalism: origins, concepts, methods, and aims* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006). 40.

[10] That this was not an inevitable assumption can be seen by turning back to twenty-first century linguistics, where Noam Chomsky and others have to argue for their "big facts" about language, the "essential, unavoidable features of human language" that exist by "conceptual necessity". One such fact is that "sentences are pairings of sound and meanings", and Chomsky would argue that this binary was all that mattered against a proliferation of earlier theories, some of which were his own. In Chomsky's words: "(a.) A linguistic expression (SD) [structural description] is a pair (π, λ) [phonetic form, logical form] generated by an optimal derivation satisfying interface conditions. (b.) The interface levels are the only levels of linguistic representation". Boeckx's analysis of Chomsky's 1993 article adds that Chomsky would add the word "virtual" in brackets to "conceptual necessity" to show that "in science we must always be ready to be proven wrong". Such quibbles could only have been alien and irrelevant to Ragib. Ibid., 73. (Norbert Hornstein, Jairo Nunes, and Kleanthes K. Grohmann, *Understanding Minimalism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005). 7f.) Noam Chomsky, "A Minimalist Program for Linguistic Theory," in *The View from Building 20: essays in linguistics in honor of Sylvain Bromberger*, ed. K. Hale and S. J. Keyser (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1993), 1, 2, 3, 5, 43.

[11] Richard M. Frank, "Meanings are Spoken of in Many Ways: the Earlier Arab Grammarians," *Le Museon* 94, no. 3-4 (1981). See also the index to his collected articles: *Texts and Studies on the Development and History of Kalām*.

observation Frank makes is that the "grammarians of the period … elaborated no formal theory of meaning".[12] This is true of Ragib, who never laid out all the components of his language model in one place, nor labelled them as *his* methodology or theory. However, I will show that across his portfolio of works Ragib provided a number of compatible presentations of "what speech is" or "what language is".

Frank's conclusion is that *maʿnā* means enough different things for it to be almost impossible to translate with a single English word, and he groups these alternatives under four main headings: *maʿnā* as intent; *maʿnā* as referent; *maʿnā* as "semiotic equivalent" or paraphrase; and *maʿnā* as "conceptual significate" and "an ideal or abstract entity".[13] However, had Frank broadened the scope of his enquiry beyond the grammarians he would have confronted the fact that although manageable limits on the number of English words needed to translate *maʿnā* are elusive, there is no evidence that mediaeval Islamicate scholars had an equivalent problem. Polyvalency and homonymy were familiar issues for them but while many words and concepts were known for being multivalent, *maʿnā* was not one of them. It appears to have been a fixed part of the architecture that enabled them to deal with the polyvalency of other words. Frank writes:

> The problem [of different uses of *maʿnā*] seems not to have posed itself and it is hardly required for us to attempt to formulate a theory for them, forcing the texts to answer a question they do not raise and, more pertinently, the answer to which is not needed for our understanding of their responses to the questions they do raise.[14]

Edited by Dimitri Gutas. 3 vols. (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2005-c2008).

[12] Ibid., 260.

[13] Ibid., 314-315.

[14] Ibid., 314.

The question did not pose itself because it was irrelevant but rather because it was commonplace, widely shared, and generally assumed. I consequently understand the concept of *ma'nā* an "assumption" and translate it with the single word "idea".[15] It is true that mediaeval scholars did not need to interrogate their own assumptions in order to use them, but if we wish to understand their methodologies then we must. Methodologies have the inevitable character of affecting the subject matter of the genres in which they are used.

Whereas Frank was unsure "whether all … or which, if specifically one or some and not another, of the several meanings [of *ma'nā*] we have found and distinguished in the texts should be understood when" the word *ma'nā* is used,[16] I would argue that there is in fact a single meaning. I disagree with Djamel Eddine Kouloughli that this breadth of signification is one of the factors that "proved harmful to a meticulous and methodical study of the relationship between" *lafẓ* and *ma'nā*.[17] On the contrary, I believe that the absence of such a study by a mediaeval scholar can be evidence of the widely shared nature of the assumptions about language, mind and reality that I am investigating. When assumptions are so obvious and well-known, and at the same time so fundamental to the way one thinks, they tend not to be addressed specifically or explained explicitly. Equally, it is because *ma'nā* is such a broad concept that it proved to be so useful, and together with *lafẓ* remains such an aesthetically pleasing theory.[18]

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[15] Cf. my brief discussion of the problem of translation on page 30.

[16] Frank, "Meanings " 315.

[17] Djamel Eddine Kouloughli, "Lafẓ," in *Encyclopedia of Arabic Language and Linguistics Online Edition*, ed. Kees Versteegh, Lutz Edzard, and Rudolf de Jong (Brill Online: Brill, 2010).

[18] Cf. recent judgements on the aesthetic quality of Muḥammad b. Idrīs aš-Šāfiʿī's legal theory. David R. Vishanoff, *The Formation of Islamic Hermeneutics: How Sunni Legal Theorists Imagined a Revealed Law*, vol. 93, American Oriental Series (New Haven: American Oriental Society, 2011). 41. Joseph E. Lowry, *Early Islamic Legal Theory: the Risāla of Muḥammad ibn Idrīs al-Shāfiʿī* (Leiden: Brill, 2007). 59. For discussion of "the convergence of beautiful design and empirical pay-offs" see: Boeckx, *Linguistic Minimalism*, 82, 116f.

The aesthetic impact of using the single pairing of expression and idea to deal with all problems of meaning and signification, singularly defines Ragib's work and is found throughout the analyses of scholars writing in Arabic throughout the mediaeval period. This should not be taken to mean that it dominates everywhere to a equal extent, an observation particularly true after Ragib's death, when spectacularly successful programmes such as that of Abū Yaʿqūb Yūsuf as-Sakkākī (555/1160-626/1229)[19] had found favour in the madrasa. As-Sakkākī used the terms expression and idea, but their pairing did not structure his thought about language in the way it did Ragib's.[20] His commentator al-Ḫaṭīb al-Qazwīnī (Ǧalāl ad-Dīn Abū ʿAbdallāh Muḥammad, 666-739/1268-1338) on the other hand, did use the pairing: "in the Qazwīnian tradition the [poetics] figures are divided into two kinds, as they are anchored either in the meaning [the idea] (*maʿnawī*) or in the wording [the expression] (*lafẓī*)".[21]

Both as-Sakkākī and al-Qazwīnī fall outside the chronological scope of this dissertation, but when their work is reflected in secondary studies such as that of Ahmed Moutaouakil it can provide useful further information about the meaning of these two terms. In his *Réflexions sur la théorie de la signification dans la pensée linguistique arabe*, Moutaouakil is sensitive to the

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[19] Dates will be given in this format, A.H./A.D., and the A.D. date should be regarded as approximate ± one year, although I have calculated it correctly when the requisite information was available. The Hiǧrī calendar (A.H.) is lunar, the Gregorian calendar (A.D.) solar, and the extra notation required to represent the ambiguity in every instance would be cumbersome to little effect. Centuries (for example "the eleventh century") will be given in A.D. only.

[20] As-Sakkākī brought the linguistic disciplines in Arabic (excluding lexicograpy) together under a single umbrella, a programme and achievement that falls outside the chronological scope of this dissertation. He called this new discipline ʿilm al-adab and wrote that it contained all those aspects of *adab*, apart from lexicography, that were indispensable. Abū Yaʿqūb Yūsuf as-Sakkākī, *Miftāḥ al-ʿUlūm*, ed. ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd Hindāwī (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmīyah, 2000). 37. Cf. Kees Versteegh, "The Arabic Tradition," in *The Emergence of Semantics in Four Linguistic Traditions: Hebrew, Sanskrit, Greek, Arabic*, ed. Wout Jac van Bekkum (Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 1997), 262.

[21] Al-Qazwīnī called the subject in question ʿilm al-balāġah. The quotation is from: Wolfhart Heinrichs, "Rhetorical Figures," in *Encyclopedia of Arabic literature*, ed. Julie Scott Meisami and Paul Starkey (London / New York: Routledge, 1998), 657.

breadth of signification of key Arabic terms*,* writing that *maʿnā* can signify lexical meaning

[from a dictionary], semantic meaning [from a sign], pragmatic meaning [from an intent], a

representation of a principle (*aṣl*) [derived meaning], syntactic meanings [from relationships to

other words], and propositional content as a speech act.[22] However, he only deals with the

combination of *maʿnā* and *lafẓ* when he ascribes these two levels of analysis to the grammarians,

for whom *lafẓ* is something analogous to the modern concept of surface form while *maʿnā* is

more profound and a representation of both syntactic sense and pragmatic signification.[23]

Kees Versteegh writes that from "the point of view of the historiographer the most

fascinating aspect of the development of the science of language in the Arabic world is the

perseverance of the dichotomy of *lafẓ/maʿnā*".[24] I agree. However, Versteegh continues this

sentence:

> …in spite of a constantly changing perspective in the use of *maʿnā.* … Apparently, they
> were not bothered by the variety of meanings in which the term *maʿnā* was used and made
> no effort to clarify and demarcate these various usages…[25]

He provides a list of sixteen meanings of *maʿnā* in five groups: aspects of *maʿnā* "linked with the

speaker" (intent); "linked with the message" (intent, paraphrase, communicative purpose…);

"linked with the extra-linguistic world" (referent…); "linked with thought" ("the conceptual

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[22] Ahmed Moutaouakil, *Réflexions sur la théorie de la signification dans la pensée linguistique arabe* (Rabat: Faculté des lettres et des sciences humaines de Rabat, 1982). 53-54, 87-88.

[23] Ibid., 108-110. Moutaouakil's study reinterprets mediaeval ideas about language in order to make them contribute to modern linguistics and semiotics. He synthesises Arabic ideas into a "théorie du discours" that he says, with some justification, is pragmatics-based (i.e. centred upon language in use, deixis, and context). Moutaouakil's work is effective in demonstrating the scope, scale, and variety of mediaeval Arabic work on language, and of the relevance of these ideas to twentieth-century Western linguistics and semiotics.

[24] Versteegh, "The Arabic Tradition," 275.

[25] Ibid.

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correlate of a word", Aristotelian form, Platonic idea"); and "linked with the linguistic sign"

(lexical meaning, underlying grammatical structure or function…).[26]

Versteegh is consciously broadening his field of enquiry beyond grammar, hence the

inclusion of results of the translation process from Greek and Syriac such as the Platonic ideas.[27]

Nevertheless, what we have here is a list of the ways mediaeval scholars used a single concept,

rather than evidence of the internal subdivision of that concept. If there was, as I argue, a broad

ontological assumption that the interface between language and reality was made up of just the

two spaces of idea and expression, then it is hardly surprising that a mediaeval scholar would

translate Aristotle's "form" with the same word that he would use for "thought" or "intent". This

is, of course, not to say that mediaeval scholars did not have the tools to distinguish between

alternatives when required. The translators and Hellenistic philosophers were comfortable with

creating neologisms, and everyone else had plenty of resources in the lexicon to establish the

difference between a contemplative idea (*fikrah*…) and a specific conversational intention

(*qaṣd*…).[28]

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[26] Ibid., 230-231.

[27] Kouloughli agrees with Versteegh about the limitations of the grammarians' horizons. In his article "A propos de lafẓ et maʿnā", which starts with the statement that "[t]he pairing of *lafẓ* and *maʿnā* occupies a central position in all disciplines that are particularly concerned with language and texts…" (*le couple lafẓ/maʿnā a occupé une position centrale dans toutes les disciplines qui sont intéressées de près à la langue et aux texts…*), he writes that the grammarians had little interest in the semantic aspects of the language, by which he means those aspects connected to the meaning of words, and consequently to the mind. He suggests that this lack of interest contributed to the poverty of their contributions to the semantic dimensions of grammatical problems. Djamel Eddine Kouloughli, "A propos de *lafẓ* et *maʿnā*," *Bulletin d'Etudes Orientales* 35(1983): 43.

[28] It is only when Versteegh addresses a further subdivision of *maʿnā* into divergent grammatical meanings, by Georges Bohas working on Muwaffaq ad-Dīn Abū al-Baqāʾ Ibn Yaʿīš (553/1158-643-1245), that he is prepared to admit that subdivisions can be a problem:
> the distinction of two different *maʿnās* by Bohas is a distinction set up by a modern historiographer. Within the Arabic tradition the two senses of the term *maʿnā* are used indiscriminately, and *maʿnā* denotes at the same time the lexical and the morphological/syntactic meaning.

Versteegh, "The Arabic Tradition," 248-249. As part of a close reading of Ibn Yaʿīš' commentary on Abū al-Qāsim

Twentieth-century Arabic-language scholarship has also paid attention to expression and idea (*lafẓ* and *maʿnā*). Iḥsān ʿAbbās wrote that the binary (*ṯunāʾīyah*) of *lafẓ* and *maʿnā* was set up by the earliest scholars, crystallised with Ibn Qutaybah al-Dīnawarī's (213/828 - 276/889) division of poetry according to the quality of its *lafẓ*, *maʿnā*, or both, and was then felt to be restrictive by the great literary theorist from the generation after Ragib, ʿAbd al-Qāhir al-Ǧurǧānī (d. 471/1078).[29] Sulaymān Ḥasīkī's article on the relationship between *lafẓ* and *maʿnā* gives a well-chosen review of mediaeval and modern works that deal with this binary, showing that scholars such as Ibrāhīm ʿAbd al-Qādir al-Māzinī (d. 1949) were still able to make profitable use of the pairing to talk about language and mind in the twentieth century.[30]

Al-Ǧurǧānī had been perhaps the first mediaeval scholar to develop a meta-discourse about expressions and ideas in Arabic.[31] Unlike Ragib, he not only used these two terms, but was also interested in the way that other scholars had used them. He was aware that the genre of poetic criticism (*naqd aš-šiʿr*) had enabled opposing schools of thought to see themselves as partisans of either one or the other, and he felt that such focus on the poetic quality of either specific expressions or specific ideas obscured the importance of combinations of expressions (*naẓm*) and

az-Zamaḫšarī's (467/1075-538/1144) compendium of Arabic grammar *Kitāb al-Mufaṣṣal fī an-Naḥw*, Bohas had distinguished between the *maʿnā* that connects "hitting" and "hitter" to "hit" (the root ḍ-r-b), and the *maʿnā* that connects "hitter" to "eater" and "drinker" (the pattern *fāʿil*). Georges Bohas, "Contribution à l'étude de la méthode des grammairiens arabes en morphologie et en phonologie d'après des grammairiens arabes 'tardifs'," in *Etude des théories des grammairiens arabes I: morphologie et phonologie*, ed. George Bohas and Jean-Patrick Guillaume (Damascus: Institut Français de Damas, 1984), 27.

[29] Iḥsān ʿAbbās, *Tārīḫ an-Naqd al-Adabī ʿinda al-ʿArab* (Beirut: Dār al-Amānah, 1971). 422.

[30] Sulaymān Ḥasīkī, "Al-ʿAlāqah Bayn al-Lafẓ wa-l-Maʿnā. Dirāsah fī Abniyat al-Kalimah aṣ-Ṣawtīyah wa-ṣ-Ṣarfīyah," *al-Fikr al-ʿArabī* 21, no. 24 (2000). For al-Māzinī see: ʿUmar Riḍā Kaḥḥālah, *Muʿǧam al-Muʾallifīn: Tarāǧim Muṣannifī al-Kutub al-ʿArabīyah*, 4 vols. (Beirut: Muʾassasat ar-Risālah, 1993). 1:65. Kamal Abu Deeb thinks that al-Māzinī's analytical toolbox was taken from al-Ǧurǧānī without attribution. Kamal Abu Deeb, *Al-Jurjānī's Theory of Poetic Imagery* (Warminster: Aris & Phillips, 1979). 1-2.

[31] Kouloughli wrote that it was only with *la révolution Ǧurǧanienne* ("The al-Ǧurǧānian revolution") that *lafẓ* and *maʿnā* became the part of a semantic theory. Kouloughli, "A propos de *lafẓ* et *maʿnā*," 55-56. The problem with this chronology from my point of view is that Ragib is "pré-Ǧurǧanienne" and yet is using what appears to be an established methodology that addresses language, mind and reality with the binary of expression and idea.

their consequent combinations of ideas (*maʿnā al-maʿnā*). This was the first time that there had

been a critical assessment of the role the pairing of expression and idea had been playing in

poetics, and al-Ǧurǧānī's work has unsurprisingly been the focus of sustained attention.[32]

Margaret Larkin's monograph on al-Ǧurǧānī refers to the pairing as "the overused terms,

lafẓ and *maʿnā*",[33] which reflects her recognition of the tremendous range of conceptual

functions performed by these two terms. She is explaining how the Muʿtazilī theologian al-Qāḍī

ʿAbd al-Ǧabbār (d. 415/1024) simply defined eloquence with parallel adjectives for each term:

eloquence is elegance of expression and superiority of idea.[34] The two words in question were

indeed often used in such an indeterminate manner, but contrary to Larkin, my feeling is that

they are used so often and in so many ways not because they are vague or ill-defined, but

because they represent core assumptions with a clear semantic range.[35] Kamal Abu Deeb is more

sympathetic to the breadth of signification behind the word "expression" than Larkin; writing

that before al-Ǧurǧānī the word *lafẓ* had indicated "the sound-aspect of poetry, with no reference

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[32] Salim Kemal's engaging review of Arabic poetics is notable for its lack of dependence on al-Ǧurǧānī. However, Kemal's assertion that "it is not clear that the distinction of form from content is useful in any explanation" runs contrary to my argument throughout this dissertation. Salim Kemal, *The Poetics of Alfarabi and Avicenna* (Leiden: Brill, 1991). 1-40, 34. Cf. Charles E. Butterworth, "Review: *The Poetics of Alfarabi and Avicenna*. Islamic Philosophy, Theology, and Science, Texts and Studies. Vol. 9 by Salim Kemal," *College Literature* 23, no. 2 (1993); Anne Druart, "Review: *The Poetics of Alfarabi and Avicenna* by Salim Kemal," *The Review of Metaphysics* 46, no. 3 (1993); Julie Scott Meisami, "Review: *The Poetics of Alfarabi and Avicenna* by Salim Kemal," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 113, no. 2 (1993).

[33] Margaret Larkin, *The Theology of Meaning: ʿAbd al-Qāhir al-Jurjānī's Theory of Discourse* (New Haven: American Oriental Society, 1995). 40.

[34] Larkin translates *ǧazālat al-lafẓ wa-ḥusn al-maʿnā* as "elegance of diction and superiority of content". Ibid.

[35] In her discussion of the debate in poetic criticism between partisans of expression and partisans of idea, Larkin writes that "there exists a considerable amount of confusion in the sources regarding this issue due to the varying uses of the terms of the debate". Ibid., 10.

to its meaning", as well as the "form or construction, as opposed to the content or raw material", and finally "the single word as an independent unit".[36]

The basic constituent parts of the mechanisms that I am investigating in this dissertation, expression and idea, have therefore not gone unnoticed by scholarship. In fact, modern Arabic scholarship continues to use them confidently and productively, which may well reflect the fact that ʿAbbās, Ḥasīkī, and al-Māzinī did not have to translate these two words in order to use them. Abu Deeb, Frank, Kouloughli, Larkin, Moutaouakil, and Versteegh provide compelling evidence of the semantic breadth of the concepts involved, their commonplace nature, and their importance to mediaeval scholarship.

Secondary scholarship has shown how the word *maʿnā* can mean everything from grammatical paraphrase (the *maʿnā* of the conjunction "and" (*wa*) is connectivity) to poetic motif (the *maʿnā* of this line of poetry is that the cheeks of the beloved are like a rose).[37] The argument that I want to make, and that Ragib's works will allow me to make, is that the conceptual relationship between *wa* and the idea of connectivity behind it is analogous to the conceptual relationship between a line of poetry and the motif behind it. One is a physical representation whether written or spoken, and the other is that which the physical representation conveys. The expression, and the idea behind it.

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[36] Abu Deeb is criticised by Larkin for integrating al-Ǧurǧānī into Western literary criticism rather than into his own context, but nevertheless remains well aware throughout his *Al-Jurjānī's Theory of Poetic Imagery* that the mediaeval scholar was trying very hard to repudiate the idea that poetic quality, or its absence, was always to be evaluated in terms of expressions rather than ideas. Abu Deeb, *Al-Jurjānī's Theory*, 48, 50.

[37] Ragib was happy to use *maʿnā* for poetic motif. In his discussion of literary plagiarism (*as-sariqāt*) he talks of "the *maʿānī* that have become controversial among poets…" due to accusations of uncritical copying. Abū al-Qāsim al-Ḥusayn b. Muḥammad al-Iṣfahānī Ragib. *[Ragib on Innovative Figures of Speech] Ms. of Kitāb min Kalām ar-Rāġib fī-l-Badīʿ (Afānīn al-Balāġah)*. MSS 165 (dated estimate ca. 14th C.), in Landberg Collection, Yale University Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, New Haven. ff.38b-39b. See also Wolfhart Heinrichs, "An Evaluation of *Sariqa*," *Quaderni di Studi Arabi* 5-6(1987-1988).

Or as Ludwig Wittgenstein would have it: "*Hier das Wort, hier die Bedeutung*". Expression and idea are, as I noted above, simply two levels of linguistic structure when one is outside the Arabic-speaking world. Sadly, rather than providing us with an appropriate German translation of the pairing of expression and idea, Wittgenstein was satirising the pairing for its failure to take into account how language was used. In the next sentence he substitutes *Wort* and *Bedeutung* for two physical things: "*Das Geld und die Kuh, die man dafür kaufen kann*". His point is that a philosophy of language should be looking for something other than two simple entities; it should be looking for what people do with them: "*Anderseits aber: das Geld, und sein Nutzen*".[38] This is where the mediaeval Arabic Language Tradition as exemplified by Ragib stands out from treatments of the same subject in pre-Wittgenstein European-language intellectual history. Ragib's philosophy of language used the pairing of expression and idea to deal with the dynamics of language use, intent, truth, and ambiguity. The pairing was more than a sterile analytical division, it was a creative hermeneutic.

Finally, I must note one usage of *maʿnā* in the mediaeval Arabic sources that is not part of the pairing of expression and idea. It is an extra-linguistic meaning: *maʿnā* as the attribute, quality, accident, or form of a substance. Abū al-Ḥasan al-Ašʿarī (d. 324/935-6) wrote that: "people disagree about whether the *maʿānī* (plural of *maʿnā*) that subsist in bodies, such as movement, stillness, etc., are accidents or attributes".[39] Al-Ašʿarī is using *maʿnā* to describe a non-physical, non-sensible entity that is connected to a substance, and it is clear from the

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[38] My emphasis. "Here the word, there the meaning. The money, and the cow that you can buy with it. (But contrast: money, and its use.)" Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations: the German text with a revised English translation*, ed. G. E. M. Anscombe, 3rd ed. (Oxford: Blackwell, 2006). #120.

[39] Abū al-Ḥasan ʿAlī b. Ismāʿīl al-Ašʿarī, *Kitāb Maqālāt al-Islāmīyīn wa-Iḫtilāf al-Muṣallīn*, ed. Hellmut Ritter (Istanbul: Deutsche Morgenländische Gesellschaft / F.A. Brockhaus, 1929-1933; repr., Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner, 1980). 369.

subsequent discussion about the nature of these things and what they should be called that he was not the first to do so.[40] The word *maʿnā* is, in effect, acting as a placeholder to show that we are dealing with an idea and not a thing, and *maʿnā* is sufficiently broad and vague a term to allow it to function throughout the debate on what these *maʿānī* really are, and what they should be called. The term *maʿnā* in this usage is, however, still to an extent analogous to the linguistic *maʿnā* discussed above. Al-Ašʿarī's *maʿnā* is the intangible idea of movement or knowledge inside or behind an actual sensible substance, just as a linguistic *maʿnā* is the idea behind or within the substance of a written or spoken expression.

Language and Logic

The mediaeval Islamicate intellectual world was well aware that it had access to a rich heritage of Mediterranean thought, which had already confronted many of the problems with which it was dealing. The vast land mass east of Baghdad, which had transformed Islamicate intellectual culture through the transfer of paper-making technology from China in the eighth century,[41] was also a source of knowledge but scholars such as Ragib tended to look to, for example, ancient Persia as a source of ideas about politics rather than about knowledge. The major source for epistemology was ancient Greece, whose traditions were transmitted and commented upon by scholars throughout late antiquity right up to the eleventh century. By

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[40] Ibid., 369f. See: Harry Austryn Wolfson, *The Philosophy of the Kalam*, Structure and growth of philosophic systems from Plato to Spinoza (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1976). 115, 147-167. Also see: Richard M. Frank, "Al-maʿnà: Some Reflections on the Technical Meanings of the Term in the Kalām and Its Use in the Physics of Muʿammar " *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 87, no. 3 (1967). Frank later expressed concerns about his conclusions in this 1967 article: ———, "Meanings " 259 note 1. Also: Hans Daiber, *Das theologisch-philosophische System des Muʿammar ibn ʿAbbād as-Sulamī (gest. 830 n. Chr.)* (Wiesbaden: Orient-Institut der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft, 1975).

[41] Adam Gacek, *Arabic Manuscripts: a vademecum for readers*, Handbuch der Orientalistik (Leiden: Brill, 2009). 186.

Ragib's time, scholars had been writing in Arabic for centuries about Aristotle, Plato, and the Neoplatonic corpus of late antiquity.

The challenge these Arabic-speaking scholars encountered was the same problem of cross-cultural (and cross-historical) epistemology that Frank faced when trying to translate *maʿnā* into English: the assumptions about the interface between language and reality are different even while many of the same concepts are being discussed. If the translation of the Arabic word *maʿnā* into European languages is an example of how this problem plays out in the modern Western academy, then an example of the same problem in the mediaeval Islamicate world is the struggle to understand how Aristotle's *Rhetoric* and *Poetics* might be dealing with the same concepts as the indigenous Arabic disciplines of literary analysis and criticism (*naqd aš-šiʿr, badīʿ, balāġah, faṣāḥah,* et al.).

This struggle has been extremely well documented in a number of key works, notably those of Fritz Zimmermann and Shukri Abed on Abū Naṣr al-Fārābī's (d. 339/950) efforts to integrate the Hellenistic philosophical traditions into Arabic, and the work of Deborah L. Black on both al-Fārābī and Avicenna (Abū ʿAlī al-Ḥusayn Ibn Sīnā, 370/980-428/1037).[42] Al-Fārābī was one of the great polymaths in the Greek-derived tradition, concerned with everything from music theory to politics and prophecy. After his death, three centuries elapse before we know of another Arabic language literary theorist making a concerted attempt to use Aristotle's *Rhetoric*

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[42] F. W. Zimmermann, *Al-Farabi's Commentary and Short Treatise on Aristotle's De Interpretatione* (Oxford: Oxford University Press for the British Academy, 1981). ———, "Some Observations on al-Fārābī and the Logical Tradition," in *Islamic Philosophy and the Classical Tradition*, ed. R. Walzer (Oxford: Cassirer, 1972). Shukri B. Abed, *Aristotelian Logic and the Arabic Language in Alfārābī* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1991). Deborah L. Black, "Aristotle's 'Peri hermeneias' in Medieval Latin and Arabic Philosophy: Logic and the Linguistic Arts," *Canadian Journal of Philosophy: Supplementary Volume* 17(1991); ———, *Logic and Aristotle's Rhetoric and Poetics in medieval Arabic philosophy* (Leiden: Brill, 1990).

and *Poetics*, Ḥāzim b. Muḥammad al-Qarṭağannī (608/1211-684/1285).[43] That three hundred year gap, and the fact that in the middle of it al-Ğurğānī did not feel a need to use the *Rhetoric* or *Poetics*, points to the existence of sufficient conceptual resources within the indigenous Arabic tradition. These resources are the subject matter of this dissertation. They are also the unheard weight of cultural assumption that sits in the background when one reads, for example, Black on Avicennna.[44] Avicenna was living in an intellectual context dominated by the assumptions about Arabic, language, and literature that dominate Ragib's work, and that of a vast swathe of his contemporaries and predecessors.

While the mediaeval scholars themselves, in the disciplines I have addressed up to this point, do not appear to have made as much use of Hellenistic ideas about language and literature as might have been expected, a piece of recent modern European-language scholarship has intriguingly used Hellenistic logic to assess mediaeval Arabic scholarship. Cornelia Schöck's *Koranexegese, Grammatik und Logik* uses the lens of *Organon* logic to assess the theology and exegesis of figures in the Arabic tradition who have not usually been connected with Greek thought.[45]

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[43] Whose synthesis has been studied by Wolfhart Heinrichs, *Arabische Dichtung und griechische Poetik. Hāzim al-Qarṭağannīs Grundlegung d. Poetik mit Hilfe aristotel. Begriffe* (Beirut / Wiesbaden: Deutsche Morgenländische Gesellschaft / F. Steiner in Komm., 1969). Scholars writing in Arabic in the philhellenic *Organon* tradition (most notably Avicenna) had also of course contended with Aristotle's *Rhetoric* and *Poetics* on their own terms. See: Black, *Logic and Aristotle's Rhetoric and Poetics*. And for al-Fārābī's attitude to non-Aristotelian rhetoric, see: Maroun Aouad, "Al-Fārābī critique des traditions non aristotéliciennes de la rhétorique," in *Literary and Philosophical Rhetoric in the Greek, Roman, Syriac and Arabic Worlds*, ed. Frédérique Woerther (Hildesheim: Georg Olms, 2009).

[44] Black argues in her excellent article that Arabic scholars working on Aristotle's *Organon* did not equate logic and grammar in the way that the Latin European tradition did. Rather than seeing grammar as a tool for language in the same way as logic was a tool for thought, al-Fārābī and Avicenna relegated grammar to the study of idiom, and accepted Aristotle's inclusion of some linguistic questions at the start of *On Interpretation*. Black, "Aristotle's 'Peri hermeneias'," 77 (and passim).

[45] Cornelia Schöck, *Koranexegese, Grammatik und Logik* (Leiden: Brill, 2006). ———, "Discussions on Conditional Sentences from the Year AH17/AD 638 to Avicenna (d. AH 428/AD 1037)," in *Classical Arabic*

Schöck's central insight is that the discussions in early Arabic logical works are dealing with the same subject as discussions in early legal and theological works. In both Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ's (Abū Muḥammad ʿAbdullāh, d. ca. 137/755) analysis in *al-Manṭiq* (*Logic*) of how a syllogism is affected by its terms' potential to mean more than one thing at once,[46] and Abū Ḥanīfah's (Nuʿmān b. Ṯābit, d. 80/699-150/767) analysis of whether the "pig" prohibited in the Quran is a specific pig, or all pigs,[47] the argument is about the relationship between language, mind and reality and in particular whether an expression always stands for a specific indivisible idea, or can refer to multiple ideas.

Schöck leads her readers through the centuries of these debates, focusing on, for example, whether the definite article means that an expression signifies all members of its class, or whether it requires the addition of a quantifier to clarify the instances when it only refers to some of them.[48] She reads all these debates through the prism of Aristotle's logical works, an exercise that is productive because Aristotle does indeed, in *Prior Analytics*, warn of the logical problems caused by confusing expressions that signify the whole of things with identical expressions that signify parts of things.[49] Schöck shows that these discussions led to recognition of the problem that logical and grammatical subjects and predicates are not the same.[50] From the perspective of

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Philosophy: Sources and Reception, ed. Peter Adamson, *Warburg Institute Colloquia* (London: Warburg Institute, 2007).

[46] Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ, "al-Manṭiq," in *al-Manṭiq li-Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ wa-Ḥudūd al-Manṭiq li-Ibn al-Bihrīz*, ed. Muḥammad Taqī Dānešpažūh (Tehran: Anğumān-e Šāhanšāhī-ye Falsafah-ye Īrān, 1978), 50. Schöck, *Koranexegese*, 149.

[47] al-Ašʿarī, *Maqālāt*, 138-139. Schöck, *Koranexegese*, 114-115.

[48] For example ———, *Koranexegese*, 430-434.

[49] Ibid., 438. Aristotle, "Prior Analytics," in *Loeb Classical Library: Aristotle I* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1938; reprint, 2002), 47b.15f, 49b.14f.

[50] Schöck, *Koranexegese*, 436.

the logician, logical predication claims to determine things in reality whereas grammatical predications tell us nothing other than that words have been used.

Schöck contrasts Avicenna's consequent position that logical and grammatical predication are different with Sībawayh's (Abū Bišr ʿAmr b. ʿUṯmān d. ca. 796) identification of "expression with thing, and grammatical structure with logical relation, and therefore grammatical necessity with logical necessity".[51] The problem with this comparison is that it assumes that Sībawayh was taking part in the same conversation as Avicenna. If he was not, then reading grammar as logic results in a fallacy; grammar is not logic so grammar is bad logic. Even when conversations can be objectively recognised as having the same subject matter, such as a specific Quranic verse, and even though the broad issue of language's relationship to reality is the same, Abū Ḥanīfah and Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ are still not *a fortiori* taking part in the same conversation. The problem with Schöck's methodology is that while she is sensitive to the dynamics of the logical *Organon* tradition, by applying its concepts to the works of scholars outside that tradition she risks doing violence to their ideas.[52] My aim in this dissertation is to complement the work of scholars such

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[51] ———, "Discussions on Conditional Sentences," 70, 72.

[52] Schöck's analysis of Abū Ḥanīfah's position on the value of the singular noun is based on two passages. In one, Abū al-Ḥasan al-Ašʿarī (d. 324/935-6) is enumerating those historical figures with Murǧiʾī tendencies (a movement holding that judgements on the status of believers in the hereafter should be postponed (*murǧaʾ*), recounting an anecdote in which Abū Ḥanīfah is happy to call someone a "believer" when that person is saying that he is not sure whether the word "Muḥammad" means the Prophet or just a particular black man. Abū Ḥanīfah and his interlocutor are certainly playing with word meanings, but the thrust of the argument is that even people who play with words to the extent of heresy remain believers. Schöck's observation is that this is an understanding of synonymy in the sense of Aristotle's *Categories* I: "both a man and an ox are animals". ———, *Koranexegese*, 114-115. al-Ašʿarī, *Maqālāt*, 138-139. Aristotle and J. L. Ackrill, *Categories and De interpretatione* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1963). 1a.6. In the second passage, Abū Ḥanīfah is responding by letter to the Basran jurist ʿUṯmān al-Battī (d. 143/760) who had accused him of being a Murǧiʾī and treating grave sinners as just deviant believers. Abū Ḥanīfah starts by using Quranic verses containing both words to show that God considered belief separate from acts. Furthermore, acts can be done to a greater or lesser extent whereas belief, or assent (*taṣdīq*), can only be given or not given. He engages with al-Battī's historical arguments about whether the community were believers before the Quran revealed all the prescribed acts, and goes on to say that "belief" has to be a broad category or the participants in the civil war would cease to be believers because of their acts of killing each other. He notes that ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib, the fourth caliph, called both parties to the civil war "believers". Wordplay is less prominent than in the passage above, and it

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as Schöck by providing an analysis of ideas that do not originate in the Classical Language

Tradition with which she is familiar. My analytical toolbox therefore has to be autochthonous in

the Arabic Language Tradition, and its two heaviest tools are not major and minor premise, but

expression and idea.

Language and Law

The opening line of Aron Zysow's oft-cited Harvard Ph.D. dissertation reads: "[t]he great

dividing line in Islamic legal tradition is between those legal systems that require certainty in

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is again clear that Abū Ḥanīfah was not in any way taking part in a conversation about the logical force of nouns. Schöck, *Koranexegese*, 104-106. Nuʿmān b. Ṯābit Abū Ḥanīfah, "Risālat Abī Ḥanīfah ilā ʿUṯmān al-Battī," in *al-ʿĀlim wa-l-Mutaʿallim Riwāyat Abī Muqātil ... wa-yalīhi Risālat Abī Ḥanīfah ilā ʿUṯmān al-Battī ṯumma al-Fiqh al-Absaṭ*, ed. M. Zāhid al-Kawṯarī (Cairo: al-Ḫānǧī, 1949), 34-38. These concerns are shared by David Vishanoff, who writes that Schöck projects "onto the earliest theologians a greater concern with formal logic than is warranted by the [ ] sources". Vishanoff, *Islamic Hermeneutics*, 30.

A final example is her use of a passage in the *Amālī* of aš-Šarīf al-Murtaḍā (355/967-436/1044) to address the role of the definite object. In this passage the early Muʿtazilī theologian Wāṣil b. ʿAṭāʾ (d. 131/748-9) self-consciously uses the syllogistic form in an argument with ʿAmr b. Ubayd (d. ca. 699–761) about what to call those who pray yet commit grave sins (*ahl al-kabāʾir min ahl aṣ-ṣalāh*). ʿAmr maintains that they are hypocrites (*munāfiqūn*) because the presence of the definite article makes the combination of Quran 9:67 (at-Tawbah) and Quran 24:4 (an-Nūr) makes a syllogism: the hypocrites are **the** transgressors (***al-fāsiqūn***); the false accusers of virtuous women (i.e. the grave sinners) are **the** transgressors; therefore the grave sinners are the hypocrites (AaB, CaB, therefore, AaC). (This deviates from Aristotle's third figure in *Prior Analytics* where the conclusion is AiC (Darapti)). Wāṣil's response is to substitute different Quranic verses into the same form: those who do not use the revelation in their decisions (i.e. the grave sinners) are the unjust (*aẓ-ẓālimūn*) (Quran 5:45 (al-Māʾidah); the unbelievers (*al-kāfirūn*) are the unjust (Quran 9:67 (at-Tawbah); therefore the grave sinners are the unbelievers. Having shown that that ʿAmr's argument from the force of the definite article proves that grave sinners are unbelievers just as much as it shows they are hypocrites, Wāṣil then goes on to get ʿAmr to agree on the principle that one should use the terminology on which the majority of Muslim sectarian groups agree, rather than using terminology on which they disagree. When ʿAmr accepts this principle, Wāṣil concludes that grave sinners should be called transgressors because that is the minimum upon which all the sects agree, and ʿAmr concurs. Aš-Šarīf al-Murtaḍā, who is reporting this debate, then gives his own response: the fact of sectarian disagreement is never by itself sufficient proof that a doctrine is incorrect (*wa-baṭala ʿalā kulli ḥālin an yakūna –l-iḫtilāfu fī-l-qawli dalīlan ʿalā wuǧūbi –l-imtināʿi minhu*).

Schöck is correct that the question of the definite article is part of the discussion. However, it is clear from the text that the interlocutors were in no way engaging with the syllogism as anything other than a dialectic tool. The winner of the argument uses the force of the definite article in the syllogism merely as a reductio ad absurdum. Josef van Ess, whose translation of and commentary on this passage Schöck cites, agrees: "Seine *reductio ad absurdum* hat rein dialektische Funktion" (His reductio ad absurdum has a purely dialectic function). The core issue, and the question with which aš-Šarīf engages, is what role sectarian consensus or the lack of it can play in the politics and theology of naming. Schöck, *Koranexegese*, 43f. ʿAlī b. aṭ-Ṭāhir aš-Šarīf al-Murtaḍā, *Amālī as-Sayyid al-Murtaḍā*, ed. Muḥammad Badr ad-Dīn an-Naʿsānī al-Ḥalabī, 4 vols. (Cairo: Aḥmad Nāǧī al-Ǧamālī & Muḥammad Amīn al-Ḫānǧī, 1907). 115-116. Josef van Ess, *Theologie und Gesellschaft im 2. und 3. Jahrhundert Hidschra*, 6 vols. (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1991-1995). 5:143.

every detail of the law and those that will admit probability".[53] He then goes on to engage with a tradition of legal theory (*uṣūl al-fiqh*) that is replete with discussions of language, theories of meaning, and the problem of linguistic ambiguity. In twentieth-century Baghdad the Shia scholar Muḥammad Bāqir aṣ-Ṣadr, working in that very same tradition, gave the following summary of how the law understood language in a manual for eighteen-year old students:

> There exist in every language connections between a group of expressions and a group of ideas. Each expression is associated with a particular idea in a way that causes us, whenever we form a mental image of the expression, to transfer our minds immediately to a mental image of the idea. This conjunction between conceptualizing the expression and conceptualizing the idea and transfer of the mind from the one to the other is what we name signification.[54]

In 2000 Mohamed M. Yunis Ali wrote a comprehensive study of Sunni legal theory from the ninth to the nineteenth century using pragmatics, H. P. Grice's twentieth-century theory of communication that centers on language in use, deixis, and context.[55] Among his insights is the recognition that Taqī ad-Dīn Ibn Taymīyah (661/1269-728/1328) had a theory of meaning

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[53] Aron Zysow, "The Economy of Certainty: an Introduction to the Typology of Islamic Legal Theory" (Ph.D. Thesis, Harvard University, 1984), iii.

[54] In this quotations I have replaced Roy Mottahedeh's "utterance" with my "expression" and his "meaning" with my "idea". Muḥammad Bāqir aṣ-Ṣadr, *Lessons in Islamic Jurisprudence*, trans. Roy Mottahedeh (Oxford: Oneworld, 2003; repr., 2005). 65.

[55] Mohamed M. Yunis Ali, *Medieval Islamic Pragmatics. Sunni Legal Theorists' Models of Textual Communication* (London: Routledge, 2000). See also the references in the encyclopaedic article by Gregor Schwarb, "Capturing the Meanings of God's Speech: the relevance of *uṣūl al-fiqh* to an understanding of *uṣūl al-tafsīr* in Jewish and Muslim *kalām*," in *Davar davur ʿal ofanav: meḥḳarim be-farshanut ha-Miḳra yeha-Ḳorʾan bi-yeme ha-benayim mugashim le-Ḥagai Ben Shamai / A word fitly spoken: studies in mediavel exegesis of the Hebrew Bible and the Quran presented to Haggai Ben-Shammai*, ed. Meʾir Mikhaʾel Bar-Asher, Simon Hopkins, Sarah Stroumsa, and Bruno Chiesa (Jerusalem: Mekhon Ben-Tsevi, 2007), 136 n.100. Despite this, specialists still feel that not enough attention has yet been paid to language: "modern scholarship … has thus far largely ignored theories of language embodied in Islamic law". Ahmed El Shamsy, "From Tradition to Law: the Origins and Early Development of the Shāfiʿī School of Law in Ninth-Century Egypt" (Ph.D. Thesis, Harvard University, 2009), 71 n.57.

closely analogous to "the Gricean programme for reducing meaning to the contents of intentions of speakers".[56]

Legal theory therefore contains a discourse about certainty and ambiguity, has a well-developed and self-conscious theory of meaning, and clear and instructive parallels with modern Western linguistic thought can be made. Ragib, however, was not writing legal theory, just as he was not writing grammatical theory. He was perfectly aware of both traditions, and equally certain that he was not a direct part of either. Ragib was also writing before the madrasa transformed intellectual culture and placed the law at its centre.[57] A few madrasas did exist in Iran and Iraq during Ragib's lifetime but he had passed away when the great Saljuk vizier Niẓām al-Mulk founded the famous Niẓāmīyah madrasa in Baghdad, consecrated on 10 Ḏū al-Qaʿdah 459 / 22 September 1067.[58] Ragib therefore represents a chance to study a set of ideas that must have been influential in the madrasa (his *Quranic Glossary* would after all become hugely popular) and that must at the same time represent the culmination of centuries of thought and speculation in Arabic about the interface between language, mind and reality. If one considers the madrasa age with its great synthesising figures as a new consensus, then Ragib is one of the last language-obsessed scholars of an Arabic Language Tradition that would disappear when the madrasa started to produce new syntheses. The third point of separation between Ragib's work

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[56] "Intentions of speakers" are what make a cry to a skater of "the ice is very thin!" into a warning rather than a statement of fact. Quentin Skinner, *Visions of Politics. Volume 1: regarding method* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002). 133-135. See also Michael Carter, "Pragmatics and Contractual Language in Early Arabic Grammar and Legal Theory," in *Approaches to Arabic linguistics: presented to Kees Versteegh on the occasion of his sixtieth birthday*, ed. C. H. M. Versteegh, Everhard Ditters, and Harald Motzki (Leiden: Brill, 2007), esp. 27f. Jeff Speaks, "Theories of Meaning," in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. Edward N. Zalta (http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2011/entries/meaning/Summer 2011 Edition).

[57] Vishanoff, *Islamic Hermeneutics*, 252, 271.

[58] J. Pedersen and G. Makdisi, "Madrasa," in *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*, ed. P. Bearman, Th. Bianquis, C.E. Bosworth, E. van Donzel, and W.P. Heinrichs (Brill Online: Brill, 2011).

and legal theory is that legal theory is a hermeneutic that analyses language in order to explain and interpret it, whether the object of study be a person's contractual utterance or God's divine word. Ragib, on the other hand, had a understanding of how language worked that applied equally well to both language production and language interpretation. He did both poetics and exegesis.

Ragib was not writing legal theory, but he was aware of it as a discipline well-established in his pre-madrasa age. There has been substantial recent scholarship on early legal theory, and David Vishanoff's important study has addressed the core issues of ambiguity and language therein.[59] Vishanoff tells how legal theory, inspired in large part by the work of Muḥammad b. Idrīs aš-Šāfiʿī (d. 204/820) chose to both exploit the ambiguity it claimed was inherent in the Arabic language, and react against that ambiguity. Vishanoff's focus on the law makes him ask whether the hermeneutical theories he is analysing actually changed rulings by judges in court, leading him to ask "[w]hy … did legal theory come to be dominated by such a powerful and flexible hermeneutic, if most of the interpretative possibilities it offered were never to be pursued?".[60] The answer can be found in the assumptions and debates about language, mind, and reality that, rather than being created by legal theory, were merely reflected in it. Vishanoff is of course aware of the array of non-legal disciplines and usefully reviews exegesis, theology and grammar in his introduction, but approaching ambiguity solely through hermeneutics is inherently limiting.[61] As I have noted above, Ragib and many like him were concerned with the ontology of language, mind, and reality; truth and cosmology were at stake rather than just rules

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[59] Vishanoff, *Islamic Hermeneutics*.

[60] Ibid., 8, 7-9.

[61] Ibid., 15-34.

for syntax and morphology (grammar) or rules for human behaviour (law). These broader concerns of his can easily be called "philosophy".

An indication of this difference of scope and scale can be found in a comparison of the language mechanisms that Vishanoff and I are investigating. One major focus of Vishanoff's linguistic analysis is the general or specific force of an expression (ʿāmm versus ḫāṣṣ). This binary is inevitably about the relationship between a spoken or written text and reality; how many of the pigs existing in real life are indicated by the word "pig"? However, if one focuses on the binary of expression and idea (lafẓ and maʿnā), the issue comes to be about the relationship between words and mind. General and specific are then just two ways that expression and idea can interact.[62] For example, Ragib describes the signification of "those who were brought" in Quran 3:23 as follows: "even though the expression is general, the idea behind it is specific".[63]

Language and Ragib

Ragib is at the centre of this dissertation about language, and yet he is part of neither of the disciplinary traditions discussed above: grammar and the law. In the following chapter I will discuss the difficulties of situating him in any particular discipline. It will suffice to say here that despite his protestations, he was at times engaged in theology (kalām).[64] He made use of the

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[62] For a comprehensive review of the different ways that the ʿāmm – ḫāṣṣ binary was used by the first major legal theorist see: Lowry, *Early Islamic Legal Theory*, 72-87. In what follows, I will also argue that another well-known pairing, ḥaqīqah and maǧāz, is equally dependent on the core linguistic structure of expression and idea. See note 415f below.

[63] The "those" in question (allaḏīna ūtū…) are the Jews to whom God gave revelation through prophets prior to Muḥammad. Abū al-Qāsim al-Ḥusayn b. Muḥammad al-Iṣfahānī Ragib, *[Exegesis of Quran 3:1 to 4:113] Tafsīr ar-Rāġib al-Iṣfahānī*, ed. ʿĀdil b. ʿAlī aš-Šidī, 2 vols. (Riyad: Madār al-Waṭan li-n-Našr, 2003). 481f.

[64] The translation of kalām as "theology" is an oversimplification, but the alternative is prolixity. "Speculative theology?" "Scriptual philosophy?" "Dialectic, eristics and speculative science?". One's choice of translation often depends on whether one wishes to preserve a distinction made in the educational institutions of thirteenth and fourteenth-century Europe between a "theology" that made use of scripture and a "philosophy" or "science" that did

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resources of the Arabic Language Tradition to analyse and propose solutions for problems that

scholars had been debating for centuries: is the Quran eternal? Does God really have the "hands"

that he is described as having in the Quran? Versteegh remarked that the Greek and Arabic

grammatical traditions shared a concern with interpreting a text (the Homeric poems and the

Quran) that led them to restrict their focus to linguistic matters, faced as they both were with

vigorous philosophical traditions that were making claims about language and its relationship to

mind and reality.[65] This may well be true, but Ragib's career is a reminder that it cannot be the

whole truth. Ragib was a scholar who cared about ontology and was comfortable with

philosophical ideas. By putting the focus in this investigation of linguistic methodologies onto

Ragib we will inevitably engage with ideas about language, mind and reality, as opposed to just

language on its own.

When we move outside law and logic, there is much less recent scholarship on language

and ambiguity. Gregor Schwarb concluded that a "comprehensive monography on *kalāmic*

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not. Richard Rorty, "The Historiography of Philosophy: four genres," in *Philosophy in history: essays on the historiography of philosophy*, ed. Richard Rorty, J. B. Schneewind, and Quentin Skinner (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 66. The range of subjects that *kalām* involved, a list that could scarcely serve as a translation, was laid out by Abū Ḥasan al-Ašʿarī (d. 324/935) in his *Risālah fī Iḥstiḥsān al-Ḫūḍ fī ʿIlm al-Kalām* (*A Vindication of the Science of Kalām*): *al-kalāma fī –l-ḥarakti wa-s-sukūni wa-l-ǧismi wa-l-ʿaraḍi wa-l-alwāni wa-l-awkāni wa-l-ǧuzʾi wa-ṭ-ṭafrati wa-ṣifāti –l-bārī…* (*kalām* about motion and rest, body and accident, accidental modes and states, the atom and the leap, and the attributes of the Creator). Abū al-Ḥasan ʿAlī b. Ismāʿīl al-Ašʿarī, *The theology of al-Ashʿarī: the Arabic texts of al-Ashʿarī's Kitāb al-lumaʿ and Risālat istiḥsān al-khawḍ fī ʿilm al-kalām: with briefly annotated translations, and appendices containing material pertinent to the study of al-Ashʿarī*, ed. Richard Joseph McCarthy (Beirut: Imprimerie Catholique, 1953). 88, 120. Confirming the authorship of this *Risālah*, see: Richard M. Frank, "Elements in the Development of the Teaching of Al-Ash'ari," *Le Muséon* 104, no. 1-2 (1991): 141f. Ragib defines *ʿilm al-kalām* as: "knowledge of rational indicators, real demonstrative proofs, division and definition, the difference between reason and supposition, etc." (*maʿrifatu –l-adillati –l-ʿaqlīyati wa-l-barāhīna –l-ḥaqīqīyati wa-t-taqsīmi wa-t-taḥdīdi wa-l-farqi bayna –l-maʿqūlāti wa-l-maẓnūnāti wa-ġayri ḏālik*). Abū al-Qāsim al-Ḥusayn b. Muḥammad al-Iṣfahānī Ragib, *[Methodological Introduction] Muqaddimat Jāmiʿ at-Tafāsīr maʿ Tafsīr al-Fātiḥah wa Maṭāliʿ al-Baqarah*, ed. Aḥmad Ḥasan Farḥāt (Kuwait: Dār ad-Daʿwah, 1984). 95. ———, "[Methodological Introduction] Muqaddimah fī-t-Tafsīr," in *al-Ḥawālid min Ārāʾ ar-Rāġib al-Iṣfahānī fī Falsafat al-Aḫlāq wa-t-Tašrīʿ wa-t-Taṣawwuf*, ed. Ṣalāḥ ad-Dīn ʿAbd al-Laṭīf an-Nāhī (Amman / Beirut: Dār ʿAmmār / Dār al-Ǧīl, 1987), 121-122.

[65] Kees Versteegh, "The Notion of 'Underlying Levels' in the Arabic Grammatical Tradition," *Historiographia Linguistica* 21, no. 3 (1994): 288-290.

theories of meaning and signification remains a desideratum", and the references he subsequently provided were to the works of Schöck, Frank, Versteegh and Vishanoff discussed above.[66] This may well reflect the dynamics of Western scholarship. Rorty observed that it tends to focus on, for example, mediaeval logic and language rather than mediaeval theology. This is because it is easier to connect mediaeval logic and language to modern scholarship and modern debates.[67] The same is self-evidently true of law. Theology is no longer of any use to us; few careers or livelihoods are bound up with the ontological status of God's attributes.

Ragib was more than just a theologian (*mutakallim*). He was an exegete and, importantly, a littérateur and theorist of poetics. Such combinations of language-centred disciplines have been identified and studied by Wolfhart Heinrichs, who started with the dichotomy between literal and non-literal language (*ḥaqīqah* and *maǧāz*) and traced it through mediaeval discussions about poetry, exegesis, and legal hermeneutics.[68] The literal/non-literal binary is an important one, but it is not the mechanism that drives Ragib's methodology. Instead, it is the binary of expression and idea that is most important. Literal language and non-literal language are, like general and specific, just two more ways that expression and idea interact.[69]

Scholars writing in Arabic, Persian, and Turkish are well-aware of the importance of language in Ragib's work. Ömer Kara writes in the second edition of the *İslâm Ansiklopedisi* that Ragib moves forward from the simple idea that *lafẓ* is limited and *maʿnā* is unlimited to dwell on

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[66] Schwarb, "Capturing the Meanings," 131 n.86.

[67] Rorty, "The Historiography of Philosophy," 86-87.

[68] Wolfhart Heinrichs, "Contacts Between Scriptural Hermeneutics and Literary Theory in Islam: The Case of Majāz " *Zeitschrift für Geschichte der Arabisch-Islamischen Wissenschaften* 7(1991/1992); ———, "On the Genesis of the *ḥaqīqa-majāz* Dichotomy," *Studia Islamica*, no. 59 (1984). ———, *The Hand of the Northwind: opinions on metaphor and the early meaning of istiʿāra in Arabic poetics* (Wiesbaden: Deutsche Morgenländische Gesellschaft, 1977).

[69] See note 415 below.

homonymy and semantic extension.[70] The leading writers on Ragib in their respective languages, ʿUmar ʿAbd ar-Raḥmān as-Sārīsī and Sayyed ʿAlī Mīr Lawḥī, both credit Ragib with a particular skill in and attention to language.[71] However, no-one has tried to work out the mechanisms that underpin his thinking, nor has anyone given the most important binary, expression and idea, its methodological due.

Methodological Issues

Ragib never elaborated a theory of meaning

"Real historians wait for the evidence to suggest questions by itself"[72] is a principle that I have tried hard to adhere to, but risks remain as I attempt to describe a methodology that Ragib never explicitly elaborated or claimed to follow. There is a "constant temptation to find a 'message' which can be abstracted and more readily communicated".[73] The exegetical process of finding ideas that are "rarely worked out systematically" and then trying to "present these ideas in some coherent form … gives the thoughts of the major philosophers a coherence, and an air generally of a closed system, which they may never have attained or even aspired to attain".[74] I am hopeful that if Ragib were to be presented with my account of his methodology in some hypothetical time-travel situation he would recognise it and approve, thereby confirming my

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[70] Ömer Kara and Anar Gafarov, "Râgib el-İsfahânî," in *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfi İslâm Ansiklopedisi*, ed. Kemal Güran (Istanbul: Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı, 2007), 398. I am grateful to Dimitris Kastritsis for his assistance with the translation of this entry,

[71] ʿUmar ʿAbd ar-Raḥmān as-Sārīsī, *ar-Rāġib al-Iṣfahānī wa-Ǧuhūdahu fī-l-Luġah wa-l-Adab* (Amman: Maktabat al-Aqṣā, 1987). Sayyed ʿAlī Mīr Lawḥī, *Rāġeb-e Eṣfahānī: zendegī va āṯār-e ū* (Isfahan: Sāzmān-e Farhangī-ye Tafrīḥī-ye Šahrdārī-ye Iṣfahān, 2008). See also Ragib, *Exegesis ed. aš-Šidī*, 253.

[72] Skinner, *Visions of Politics*, 15. Skinner is paraphrasing G. R. Elton's 1969 *The Practice of History*.

[73] Ibid., 67.

[74] Ibid., 68. Skinner is criticising J. W. N. Watkins' 1965 *Hobbes's System of Ideas*.

adherence to Quentin Skinner's principle that: "no agent can be said to have meant or achieved something which they could never be brought to accept as a correct description of what they had meant or achieved".[75]

Nevertheless, my exegesis is creating something new. Heinrichs has usefully described such a process as the creation of "a finely tuned tool which is not exactly theirs and not exactly ours".[76] The value of Skinner's principle is that it reminds us of the risk of slipping from "not exactly theirs" to "not theirs at all". Although Schöck was aware that she was analysing an implicit logic rather than explicit textual evidence, she can hardly have imagined that her mediaeval interlocutors among theologians and lawyers would recognise her portrayal of their ideas.[77]

Perhaps one reason that I am forced to attribute to Ragib a theory of meaning that he never explicitly described is that it is in the very nature of language to both govern our minds' interactions with reality and yet at the same time always remain in the background as an unquestioned assumption. This is the problem that Wittgenstein was talking about when he wrote:

> Wir wollen in unserm Wissen vom Gebrauch der Sprache eine Ordnung herstellen: eine Ordnung zu einem bestimmten Zweck … Wir werden zu diesem Zweck immer wieder Unterscheidungen <u>hervorheben</u>, die unsre gewöhnlichen Sprachformen leicht übersehen

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[75] Ibid., 77.

[76] Heinrichs was discussing his own reconstruction of a theory of Arabic literary plagiarism from mediaeval scholars' works. Heinrichs, "Evaluation of Sariqa," 358.

[77] Schöck wrote that while "there is *no indication* of a logical reflection on the opposing doctrinal standpoints" she would "rather label the early discussions about the understanding of sentences as implicit logic." My emphasis. Schöck, "Discussions on Conditional Sentences," 63. See also note 52.

lassen … Die Verwirrungen, die uns beschäftigen, enstehen gleichsam, wenn die Sprache leerläft, nicht wenn sie arbeitet.[78]

Ragib never had to explain his assumptions about language to his readers because in their mediaeval Arabic-language scholarly context these assumptions were the "ordinary forms of language" that Wittgenstein mentions. As well as watching them run, we have to put Ragib's language mechanisms into neutral so that their engine idles and we can look at them. After all, Ragib was prepared to take this same step himself. He would stop at a problem, pause, and then deconstruct its language. This happens much more often in his works, and indeed in the works of other mediaeval Arabic scholars, than we find in the works of European-language scholars, whether mediaeval or modern. The difference reflects the extent to which Ragib and others like him were obsessed with language.

Another of Wittgenstein's metaphors is equally useful for examining mediaeval Islamicate intellectual culture. He described how children interact with language and reality through language games based around naming. Adults play language games too and can deviate from existing rules of the game to make up new rules.[79] Scholars such as Ragib had complicated language games based around mechanisms like metaphor and the manipulation of polysemy. Some of these language-games, such as homonymy, were well known and did not need to have their rules explained, whereas others such as Ragib's ideas about metaphor and metonymy needed to be laid out in the hope that others would start playing them.

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[78] Emphasis in original. ("We want to establish an order in our knowledge of the use of language: an order with a particular end in view … To this end we shall be constantly giving prominence to distinctions which our ordinary forms of language easily make us overlook … The confusions which occupy us arise when language is like an engine idling, not when it is doing work.") Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, #132.

[79] Ibid., #7, #83.

Translation

This dissertation is an attempt to follow Rorty's exhortation to "get into the swing of whatever exotic language-games are being played by the people whose beliefs we are trying to describe and explain".[80] The problem is that once in the swing of the game one has to describe it to people who are not playing. Wittgenstein again: *Wenn ich über Sprache … rede, muss ich die Sprache des Alltags reden*.[81] The most faithful rendering of a term in an academic work will always be transliteration, which would mean that this dissertation would be written in a language, perfectly intelligible to specialists, of English and Arabic *alfāẓ* combined!

The problem is that an alien term, once translated, ceases to be alien. Once it becomes familiar it is coloured by the associations of the familiar term in the target language. This is the process of cross-cultural epistemology. As Skinner says, the idea that we have to "pair the terms used by alien peoples with counterparts in our own languages" in order to understand them is too optimistic. "Often there will be no prospect of translating terms in an alien language by means of anything approaching counterparts in our own".[82] I believe that this does not hold for the rendering of *lafẓ* and *maʿnā* with "expression" and "idea", but I accept that it is the case with many other Arabic words, particularly those that denote a discipline or type of knowledge unlike anything that exists in our own context. Examples of this latter category that will be encountered below are *adab*, *istiʿārah*, and *badīʿ*.

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[80] Skinner, *Visions of Politics*, 43. Skinner is paraphrasing and criticising Rorty for not providing enough detail of the intended interpretative strategy.

[81] My emphasis. ("When I talk *about* language … I must speak the language of every day"). Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, #120.

[82] Skinner, *Visions of Politics*, 46. I have removed the quotation marks that constitute Skinner's criticism of Martin Hollis' article "The Limits of Irrationality" in *Rationality*, edited by Bryan R. Wilson (Oxford: 1970).

Cross-cultural epistemology extends into the names and boundaries of disciplines. Ragib did not see himself as a philosopher of language like Wittgenstein, and would not have understood modern philosophy departments that focus on language, mind, and epistemology. He saw himself as, among other things, a lexicographer and an exegete. He also kept his exegesis and his poetics largely separate. If I were to do the same thing, and stay within his terminological and disciplinary boundaries, then I would struggle to deal with the very underlying methodological structure that I am trying to explain.

2. RAGIB

The Arabic, Persian, and European-language biographical traditions have not done justice to Ragib. Confusions and contradictions abound in their archives about the most basic facts of his life and even the century in which he lived. In this chapter I review his life, his works, and his times.[83]

Life

Dates

We now know for certain that Ragib was alive in or before the year 409/1018. The manuscript of his *Quranic Glossary* that proves this was brought to light by Muḥammad ʿAdnān al-Ǧawharǧī in a 1986 article, and I have been able to consult it at the home of its owner, Muḥammad Luṭfī al-Ḫaṭīb, in London.[84] Its colophon is dated Muḥarram 409 (May-June 1018) and it has a titlepiece in New Abbasid Style script beneath which is a purchase note from 7 Šawwāl 420 (18 October 1029). The purchase note is significant because it contains names and handwriting that I have been able to verify:

ʿAlī b. ʿUbaydallāh aš-Šīrāzī bought this book from the city of Isfahan on the seventh of the month of Šawwāl in the year 420 for the library of al-Ustāḏ al-Ǧalīl Abū al-Muẓaffar

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[83] Recent biographical studies include: as-Sārīsī, *ar-Rāġib*. Mīr Lawḥī, *Rāġeb*. Muḥammad Kurd ʿAlī, *Kunūz al-Aġdād* (Damascus: Maṭbaʿat at-Taraqqī, 1950). 268-271. Kara and Gafarov, *İslâm Ansiklopedisi*. Geert Jan van Gelder, "Rāġeb Eṣfahāni," in *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, ed. Ehsan Yarshater (New York: Iranicaonline Website, 2010). Everett Rowson, "al-Rāghib al-Iṣfahānī, Abū 'l-Ḳāsim al-Ḥusayn b. Muḥammad b. al-Mufaḍḍal," in *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*, ed. P. Bearman, Th. Bianquis, C.E. Bosworth, E. van Donzel, and W.P. Heinrichs (Brill Online: Brill, 2009).

[84] Muḥammad ʿAdnān al-Ǧawharǧī, "Raʾy fī Taḥdīd ʿAṣr ar-Rāġib al-Iṣfahānī," *Maǧallat Maǧmaʿ al-Luġah al-ʿArabīyah bi-Dimašq* 61, no. 1 (1986). Al-Ǧawharǧī's article is reprinted in ʿUmar ʿAbd ar-Raḥmān as-Sārīsī, *Fī-d-Difāʿ ʿan ar-Rāġib al-Iṣfahānī: ʿaṣruhū wa-muʿtaqaduhū wa-āṯāruhū* (Amman: Printed with the assistance of the Ministry of Culture, 2008). 49-56. Abū al-Qāsim al-Ḥusayn b. Muḥammad al-Iṣfahānī Ragib. *Ms. of Mufradāt Ġarīb al-Qurʾān al-Karīm [Quranic Glossary]* (dated 409/1018), in Library of Muḥammad Luṭfī al-Ḫaṭīb, Private Collection, London. See Appendix for a description of the manuscript and a discussion of al-Ǧawharǧī's plates.

Ibrāhīm b. Aḥmad b. al-Layt̲, may God prolong his life in nobility and wealth and preserve his high rank.[85]

Abū al-Muz̲affar Ibrāhīm b. Aḥmad b. al-Layt̲ al-Azdī (fl. 432/1041) was a littérateur (*adīb*) and the scribe (*kātib*) of the Kurdish prince Wahsūdān b. Mamlān ar-Rawwādī (Abū Manṣūr, reg. 416/1025-451/1059).[86]

From an Istanbul manuscript we learn that Abū al-Muz̲affar Ibrāhīm's employee ʿAlī b. ʿUbaydallāh aš-Šīrāzī was in Tabriz four years after he was in Isfahan.[87] In Ramaḍān 424 / July-August 1033 he copied out the *Diwān* of Abū ʿUbādah al-Walīd al-Buḥturī (206/821-284/897) and wrote on the title page:

> Copied by ʿAlī b ʿUbaydallāh aš-Šīrāzī in the city of Tabriz in the year 424 in the month of Ramaḍān, in the service of the library of al-Ustād̲ al-Ǧalīl Abū al-Muz̲affar Ibrāhīm b. Aḥmad b. al-Layt̲, may God prolong his life in nobility and wealth and preserve his high rank.[88]

ʿAlī b. ʿUbaydallāh aš-Šīrāzī's handwriting is identical in the London and Istanbul manuscripts.

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[85] ———. *Mufradāt al-Ḥaṭīb Collection*. f.1a.

[86] Originally from Azerbaijan, Abū al-Muz̲affar's travels in Isfahan, Tabriz, and Astarābād̲ (now Gorgan, Iran) before arriving in Damascus in 432/1041 are detailed in: Abū al-Qāsim ʿAlī Ibn ʿAsākir, *Tārīḫ Madīnat Dimašq*, ed. ʿAmr b. Ġarāmah al-ʿUmrawī, 80 vols. (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 1995). 6:264-268. See also: Ibn ʿAbdallāh al-Ḥamawī Yāqūt, *Muʿǧam al-Udabāʾ: Iršād al-Arīb ilā Maʿrifat al-Adīb*, ed. Iḥsān ʿAbbās (Beirut: Dār al-Ġarb al-Islāmī, 1993). 1:40-41. Ǧalāl ad-Dīn as-Suyūṭī, *Buġyat al-Wuʿāh fī Ṭabaqāt al-Luġawīyīn wa-n-Nuḥāh*, ed. Muḥammad Abū al-Faḍl Ibrāhīm, 2 vols. (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 1979). 1:406. Ḫalīl b. Aybak aṣ-Ṣafadī, *Kitāb al-Wāfī bi-l-Wafāyāt*, ed. Ridwān as-Sayyid, 30 vols. (Leipzig: Deutsche Morgenländische Gesellschaft / F.A. Brockhaus, 1962-2007). 5:310. Kaḥḥālah, *Muʿǧam al-Muʾallifīn*, 1:11. Wahsūdān ar-Rawwādī was the most successful leader of the ar-Rawwādī dynasty that ruled in Azerbaijan in the eleventh century. C. E. Bosworth suggests that their ethnic origin was Arab, from the Yemeni tribe of Azd, which would explain Abū al-Muz̲āffar's *nisbah* of al-Azdī. C.E. Bosworth, *The New Islamic Dynasties* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996). 150.

[87] It appears that aš-Šīrāzī was accompanying Abū al-Muz̲affar on his travels. See note 86.

[88] Abū ʿUbādah al-Walīd b. ʿUbayd al-Buḥturī. *Ms. of Diwān*. Fazıl Ahmed Paşa 1252 (dated 425/1033-4), Süleymaniye, Istanbul. f.1a. He finished the copyfive months later in Ṣafar 425 (December 1033-January 1034). Ibid., f.198b. See also Ramazan Şeşen, *Fihris Maḫṭūṭāt Maktabat Kūprīlū*, 3 vols. (Istanbul: Markaz al-Abḥāt̲ li-t-Tārīḫ wa-l-Funūn at̲-T̲aqāfīyah al-Islāmīyah, 1986). 2:36, cf. 2:12.

Beneath aš-Šīrāzī's purchase note on the *Quranic Glossary* there is also a reading note and again it can be verified:

> Aš-Šayḫ al-Fāḍil al-Adīb Abū Ǧaʿfar Muḥammad b. Abū Bakr b. an-Naqīb aš-Šahrastānī, may God embellish his success, read this book to me from beginning to end. This was in the year 510. [This note was] written by Mawhūb b. Aḥmad b. Muḥammad al-Ḫaḍir al-Ǧawālīqī in praise of God for his blessings, and in prayer and salutation to his messenger Muḥammad and his family.[89]

Mawhūb b. Aḥmad al-Ǧawālīqī (466/1073-539/ 1144) is the famous author of *al-Muʿarrab min al-Kalām al-Aǧamī ʿalā Ḥurūf al-Muʿǧam*, an explanatory lexicon of foreign words in Arabic.[90] Abū Ǧaʿfar aš-Šahrastānī is known to have studied lexicography with him in Baghdad.[91] These two men appear in an almost identical reading note dated 514/1120, again written by al-Ǧawālīqī, on the cover of a copy of Abū Bakr Muḥammad b. ʿUmar al-ʿUzayrī as-Siǧistānī's (d. 300/941) dictionary of rare Quranic words in Dublin.[92] Al-Ǧawālīqī's handwriting is identical in the London and Dublin manuscripts.[93]

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[89] Ragib. *Mufradāt al-Ḫaṭīb Collection*. f.1a.

[90] Yāqūt, *Muʿǧam al-Udabāʾ*, 2735-2737. Abū Barakāt ʿAbd ar-Raḥmān Ibn al-Anbārī, *Nuzhat al-Alibbāʾ fī Ṭabaqāt al-Udabāʾ*, ed. Ibrāhīm as-Sāmarrāʾī (Baghdad: Maktabat al-Andalus, 1970). 293-295.

[91] as-Suyūṭī, *Buġyat al-Wuʿāh*, 1:388. Kaḥḥālah, *Muʿǧam al-Muʾallifīn*, 1:301.

[92] "Aš-Šayḫ al-Fāḍil al-Adīb Abū Ǧaʿfar Muḥammad b. Abū Bakr b. an-Naqīb aš-Šahrastānī, may God embellish … read this book to me from beginning to end. This was in the year 514. [This note] written by Mawhūb b. Aḥmad b. Muḥammad al-Ḫaḍir al-Ǧawālīqī in praise of God, and in prayer and salutation to his messenger Muḥammad …" Abū Bakr Muḥammad as-Siǧistānī. *Tafsīr Ġarīb al-Qurʾān*. AR 3009 (dated 499/1106), Chester Beatty, Dublin. f.1a. A. J. Arberry and Ursula Lyons, *The Chester Beatty Library. A handlist of the Arabic manuscripts*, 8 vols. (Dublin: E. Walker, 1955). 1:3 (inc. plate).

[93] It should be noted that while al-Ǧawālīqī's handwriting in the two reading notes is identical, the Dublin manuscript (of which he is the copyist) provides evidence that he could also write in a more careful script when required. That more formal script is the one reproduced by: Ḫayr ad-Dīn az-Ziriklī, *al-Aʿlām*, 8 vols. (Beirut: Dār al-ʿIlm li-l-Malāyīn, 2002). 7:335.

There is a further note on the title page of the London *Quranic Glossary* manuscript but it is anonymous and cannot be corroborated in the way that we could corroborate the notes by aš-Šīrāzī and al-Ǧawālīqī. It comes in between the aš-Šīrāzī and al-Ǧawālīqī notes, and reads:

> The author of this book was born at the beginning of the month of Raǧab in the year 343 in the citadel of Isfahan (*qaṣbat Iṣfahān*), and died on the ninth of Rabīʿ al-Āḫar in the year 422, may God exalted have mercy on him, Amen.[94]

The London *Quranic Glossary* manuscript is the only physical evidence that exists from Ragib's lifetime, if indeed he was still alive when it was written. It proves that he was alive in or before 409/1018. The combination of the manuscript's colophon dated 409/1018 and its verifiable purchase note dated 420/1029 is enough to establish this beyond reasonable doubt. To fix Ragib in a still more defined time and place requires us to look at the references he makes to other people.

In a persuasive confirmation of the evidence that as-Sārīsī had already been putting together on Ragib's dates and lifetime,[95] Iḥsān ʿAbbās picked up references to two figures of the late tenth and early eleventh centuries.[96] The first is Abū al-Qāsim Ġānim b. Abī al-ʿAlāʾ, a member of the retinue of that famous patron and politician the vizier aṣ-Ṣāḥib Ibn ʿAbbād (938-

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[94] Ragib. *Mufradāt al-Ḫaṭīb Collection*. f.1a. The note appears to be in the same hand as an ownership note on the title page: "from the books of Muḥammad b. Aḥmad al-Anṣārī, may God benefit him with knowledge". I have not been able to trace Al-Anṣārī. The dates would mean that Ragib died age 78, a number that does not tally with another anonymous note on an Istanbul manuscript. ———. *Ms. of Kitāb aḏ-Ḏarīʿah ilá Makārim aš-Šarīʿah*. Damad Ibrahim 768 (dated ?), Süleymaniye, Istanbul. title page. Cf. as-Sārīsī, *ar-Rāǧib*, 32. See also Appendix.

[95] ———, *Fī-d-Difāʾ*. ———, *ar-Rāǧib*, 27-48. Abū al-Qāsim al-Ḥusayn b. Muḥammad al-Iṣfahānī Ragib, *[The Letters of ar-Rāǧib] Rasāʾil ar-Rāǧib al-Iṣfahānī*, ed. ʿUmar ʿAbd ar-Raḥmān as-Sārīsī (Irbid: ʿĀlam al-Kutub al-Ḥadīṯ, 2005). 4-8, 13-15. ʿUmar ʿAbd ar-Raḥmān as-Sārīsī, "Raʾy fī Taḥdīd ʿAṣr ar-Rāǧib al-Iṣfahānī," *Maǧallat Maǧmaʿ al-Luġah al-ʿArabīyah al-Urdunī*, no. 11/12 (1981). ———, "Ḥawla Taḥqīq Muḥāḍarāt al-Udabāʾ wa Muḥāwarāt aš-Šuʿarāʾ wa-l-Bulaġāʾ li-r-Rāǧib al-Iṣfahānī," *Maǧallat Maǧmaʿ al-Luġah al-ʿArabīyah bi-Dimašq* 80, no. 1 (2005): 204-208. Mīr Lawḥī, *Rāǧeb*, 28-31, 73-87.

[96] Iḥsān ʿAbbās, "Taʿlīqāt," *Maǧallat Maǧmaʿ al-Luġah al-ʿArabīyah al-Urdunī*, no. 23-24 (1984).

995).[97] In his literary anthology *Littérateurs' Ripostes and Poets' and Eloquent Men's Rejoinders*, Ragib writes: "Abū al-Qāsim b. Abī al-ʿAlāʾ wrote *to me* with some lines of poetry…",[98] and elsewhere:

> Abū al-Qāsim b. Abī al-ʿAlāʾ recited poetry one day that he had addressed to a leader, but we had already heard it from him before. When he was criticised for this he replied 'I composed it and I can repeat it to whomever I want'.[99]

The second connection Ragib makes is to ʿAbd as-Samad b. Bābak (d. 1019):[100] "Abū Saʿīd b. Mirdās *told me* that he sat drinking beneath a trellis of grapes with a group of people among whom was Ibn Bābak…"[101]

It seems clear that Ragib was a contemporary of known literary figures at the end of the tenth and beginning of the eleventh centuries. He talks of having spent time with a member of aṣ-Ṣāḥib's court, and this chronological connection to aṣ-Ṣāḥib is confirmed by a third reference: "some of the people *of our age* who are with aṣ-Ṣāḥib talk about…"[102] These three references to contemporary figures in Ragib's literary anthology, together with the manuscript evidence from London, are the sum total of proofs that originate in Ragib's lifetime. They are enough to establish that he was alive at the end of the tenth and beginning of the eleventh centuries, and the

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[97] Abū al-Qāsim's poems praising aṣ-Ṣāḥib's new palace in Isfahan and then, later, eulogising aṣ-Ṣāḥib after his death are recorded by court chronologers. Abū Manṣūr ʿAbd al-Malik aṯ-Ṯaʿālibī, *Yatīmat ad-Dahr fī Maḥāsin Ahl al-Aṣr*, ed. Muḥammad Muḥyī ad-Dīn ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd, 4 vols. (Cairo: Maṭbaʿat as-Saʿādah, 1956). 3:213, 3:284.

[98] My emphasis. Abū al-Qāsim al-Ḥusayn b. Muḥammad al-Iṣfahānī Ragib, *[Littérateurs' Ripostes and Poets' and Eloquent Men's Rejoinders] Muḥāḍarāt al-Udabāʾ wa-Muḥāwarāt aš-Šuʿarāʾ wa-l-Bulaġāʾ*, ed. Riyāḍ ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd Murād, 5 vols. (Beirut: Dār Ṣādir, 2006). 1:241.

[99] My emphasis. Ibid., 1:179.

[100] Kaḥḥālah, *Muʿǧam al-Muʾallifīn*, 2:154.

[101] My emphasis. Ragib, *Littérateurs' Ripostes*, 2:686. Neither Iḥsān Abbās nor Sayyid ʿAlī Mīr Lawḥī nor I have been able to identify Abū Saʿīd b. Mirdās.

[102] My emphasis. Ibid., 1:141.

anonymous birth and death dates on the front of the London *Quranic Glossary* are as good an unproven estimate as any. It is tempting to speculate as to the reasons for this lack of evidence from a time and place when biographical dictionaries, court records, and writings by scholars about scholars abound.[103] However, in the absence of textual or other evidence the temptation to speculate must be resisted.

It is in this light that further tentative connections to Ragib must be viewed. As-Sārīsī argues that the patron to whom Ragib addresses a number of his books was Abū al-ʿAbbās aḍ-Ḍabbī (Kāfī al-Awḥad, d. 399/1008),[104] the successor to aṣ-Ṣāḥib b. ʿAbbād in the vizierate of Faḫr ad-Dawlah (Abū al-Ḥasan ʿAlī b. Rukn ad-Dawlah b. Būyah, reg. 366/977-387/997, d. 387/997).[105] As-Sārīsī's argument rests on the fact that aḍ-Ḍabbī has been referred to with the honorific *al-ustāḏ ar-raʾīs* ("the scholar and leader") while Ragib says he wrote his *Analysis of the Two Creations and Attainment of the Two Happinesses* for *al-ustāḏ al-karīm* ("the noble scholar"),[106] his *On Human Virtue Arising from the Disciplines of Knowledge* for *al-ustāḏ* ("the

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[103] This dilemma is eloquently addressed by Kurd ʿAlī, who suggests that Ragib may not have been close enough to powerful people to have been remembered by their chroniclers. Kurd ʿAlī, *Kunūz*, 34.

[104] Yāqūt, *Muʿǧam al-Udabāʾ*, 1:175-181. Aḍ-Ḍabbī "belonged to one of the great Shiʿi families of Iṣfahān". David Durand-Guédy, *Iranian Elites and Turkish Rulers: a history of Iṣfahān in the Saljūk period* (Oxford: Routledge, 2010). 40. He established a library at the old Friday mosque of Isfahan. al-Mufaḍḍal b. Saʿd al-Māfarrūḫī, *Kitāb Maḥāsin Iṣfahān*, ed. as-Sayyid Ǧalāl ad-Dīn aṭ-Ṭihrānī (Tehran: Maṭbaʿat Maǧlis al-Millī, 1933). 85. Jürgen Paul, "The Histories of Isfahan: Mafarrukhi's Kitāb Maḥāsin Iṣfahān," *Iranian Studies* 33, no. 1/2 (2000): 130. For archaeological details of the mosque ("small fragments of constructions from this period [i.e. Ragib's period] remain…") see: Oleg Grabar, *The Great Mosque of Isfahan* (New York: New York University Press, 1990). 47.

[105] Bosworth, *Islamic Dynasties*, 154, #75.

[106] Abū al-Qāsim al-Ḥusayn b. Muḥammad al-Iṣfahānī Ragib, *[Analysis of the Two Creations and Attainment of the Two Happinesses] Tafṣīl an-Našʾatayn wa Taḥṣīl as-Saʿādatayn*, ed. Asʿad as-Saḥmarānī (Beirut: Dār an-Nafāʾis, 1988). 26. Mīr Lawḥī highlights a marginal correction to this phrase in a British Museum manuscript (dated 776/1374) of *Analysis of the Two Creations* that responds to the omission of *al-karīm* with an insertion that Mīr Lawḥī reads as *ar-raʾīs*. Mīr Lawḥī, *Rāġeb*, 34, 100-103. However, the reading *an-nafīs* is also possible from the plate provided by Mīr Lawḥī and this is confirmed by the older manuscript at Princeton, which reads *al-ustāḏ an-nafīs*. Abū al-Qāsim al-Ḥusayn b. Muḥammad al-Iṣfahānī Ragib. *Ms. of Kitāb aḏ-Ḏarīʿah ilá Makārim aš-Šarīʿah and Tafṣīl an-Našʾatayn wa Taḥṣīl as-Saʿādatayn*. Yahuda 3555 (dated 584/1188), in Garrett Collection (Yahuda Section), Seeley G. Mudd Manuscript Library, Princeton University, Princeton. f.142b.

scholar"),[107] and in his *On the Ordering of Intellectual Disciplines and of Worldly Actions* he refers to his love for *al-ustāḏ* at the beginning of the epistle and ends it with a prayer for the same.[108] Ragib also uses the title *al-ustāḏ ar-raʾīs* when quoting aḍ-Ḍabbī's poetry in *Littérateurs' Ripostes* and *The Confluence of Eloquence*.[109] Nevertheless, all we have here is a title (*ustāḏ*) that Ragib used anonymously, a historical figure quoted by Ragib who was referred to by the same title, and no proof.[110]

The same must be said for claims about where Ragib lived, in light of his absence from the extant histories. ʿAbbās suggests that the frequency and nature of Ragib's references to Isfahan in *Littérateurs' Ripostes* means that he probably lived there.[111] As-Sārīsī's report of an anonymous note on the cover of an Istanbul manuscript stating Ragib was from Isfahan and travelled to Baghdad is incorrect. The manuscript in question has instead only two notes about Abū Bakr Muḥammad Ibn Fūrak al-Iṣfahānī (d. 406/1015) on its title page, notes which include some of the text thought by as-Sārīsī to describe Ragib, including a trip to India and a death in

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[107] ———, *Letters*, 159.

[108] Ibid., 213, 236.

[109] *al-ustāḏ ar-raʾīs* at ———, *Littérateurs' Ripostes*, 2:247, 3:122. *al-wazīr Aḥmad b. Ibrāhīm* at ibid., 3:154. *al-wazīr ar-raʾīs Aḥmad b. Ibrāhīm* at ibid., 4:560. *al-wazīr ar-raʾīs al-kāfī al-awḥad* at ibid., 5:135. *al-ustāḏ ar-raʾīs* at ———, *[The Confluence of Eloquence] Maǧmaʿ al-Balāġah*, ed. ʿUmar ʿAbd ar-Raḥmān as-Sārīsī, 2 vols. (Amman: Maktabat al-Aqṣā, 1986). 681. See as-Sārīsī, *ar-Rāġib*, 34-37. ———, "Ra'y." ʿAbbās agreed with as-Sārīsī: ʿAbbās, "Taʿlīqāt," 200.

[110] ʿAbbās' conjecture (admitted as such) is worth a footnote here: Ragib could be the *aš-šayḫ al-ʿālim* who admits to a secret rage at aṣ-Ṣāḥib in Abū Ḥayyān court reportage. Abū Ḥayyān at-Tawḥīdī, *Aḫlāq al-Wazīrayn: maṭālib al-wazīrayn aṣ-Ṣāḥib b. ʿAbbād wa-Ibn al-ʿAmīd*, ed. Muḥammad b. Tāwīt aṭ-Ṭanǧī (Beirut: Dār Ṣādir, 1992). 316-317. ʿAbbās, "Taʿlīqāt," 202-203. It is also worth mentioning the *Abū Rāġib* who appears elsewhere in the same work with a virulent written attack on aṣ-Ṣāḥib. at-Tawḥīdī, *Aḫlāq al-Wazīrayn*, 151-159. Joel L. Kraemer, *Humanism in the renaissance of Islam : the cultural revival during the Buyid Age*, Studies in Islamic culture and history series (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1986). 264f.

[111] ʿAbbās, "Taʿlīqāt," 198-199.

Nishapur in 406/1015. There is no mention of Baghdad, reference to which is made by both as-Sārīsī and Mīr Lawḥī, the latter on the authority of Ismāʿīl Pāša (d. 1920).[112]

Finally, mention must be made of the mass of bibliographic material that erroneously places Ragib's death a century or more too late. It includes Šams ad-Dīn Abū ʿAbdallāh aḏ-Ḏahabī (673/1274-748/1348) who said Ragib was alive in 450/1058,[113] Ismāʿīl Pāša, who gave Ragib's death date as 500/1107,[114] Muḥammad Bāqir al-Ḫwānsārī (d. 1313/1895) who gave it as 565/1170,[115] and then Carl Brockelmann (d. 1956) and Wilhelm Ahlwardt (d. 1909), both following Gustav Flügel (d. 1870), who provided 502/1108-1109.[116] These materials have been reviewed in both Arabic and English and it appears to me that there has been a clear connection over the centuries between the vacuum of information about Ragib during or near his lifetime, and the need of the biographical tradition to fill that vacuum with numbers.[117] The biographical

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[112] Ibn Fūrak is the author whose work appears first in the collection (maǧmūʿah). Abū al-Qāsim al-Ḥusayn b. Muḥammad al-Iṣfahānī Ragib, Abū al-Qāsim ʿAbd al-Karīm al-Qušayrī, and Abū Bakr Muḥammad Ibn Fūrak al-Iṣfahānī. Maǧmūʿah. Ragıb Paşa 180 (dated 1163/1750), Süleymaniye, Istanbul. f.1a. as-Sārīsī, ar-Rāǧib, 33. Ragib, Letters, 5. Mīr Lawḥī, Rāǧeb, 28, 72. Ismāʿīl Pāšā b. Muḥammad al-Baǧdādī, Hadīyat al-ʿĀrifīn: Asmāʾ al-Muʾallifīn wa-Āṯār al-Muṣannifīn, 2 vols. (Istanbul: Wikālat al-Maʿārif, 1951-1955). 1:311.

[113] Šams ad-Dīn Muḥammad b. Aḥmad aḏ-Ḏahabī, Siyar Aʿlām an-Nubalāʾ, ed. Šuʿayb al-Arnaʾūṭ, 23 vols. (Beirut: Muʾassasat ar-Risālah, 1985). 18:120-121.

[114] al-Baǧdādī, Hadīyat al-ʿĀrifīn, 311.

[115] Muḥammad Bāqir b. Zayn al-ʿĀbidīn al-Ḫwānsārī, Rawḍāt al-Ǧannāt fī Aḥwāl al-ʿUlamāʾ wa-s-Sādāt, 8 vols. (Beirut: ad-Dār al-Islāmīyah, 1991). 216.

[116] Carl Brockelmann, Geschichte der arabischen Litteratur (GAL), 3. Aufl. ed., 2 vols. (Leiden / New York: E.J. Brill, 1996). 1:289. ———, Geschichte der arabischen Litteratur (GALS) [Supplementband], 2. Aufl. ed., 3 vols. (Leiden / New York: E.J. Brill, 1996). 1:505. Wilhelm Ahlwardt, Verzeichnis der arabischen Handschriften, 10 vols. (Berlin: Schade, 1887-1899; repr., Hildesheim: Georg Olms Verlag, 1980-1981). 1:268f, 5:5, 7:328f. Dagmar A. Riedel, "Searching for the Islamic episteme: The status of historical information in medieval Middle-Eastern anthological writing" (Ph.D. Thesis, Indiana University, 2004), 118-119.

[117] For reviews of the material see aš-Šidī: Ragib, Exegesis ed. aš-Šidī, 52-62. Also Dagmar Reidel, who identifies Ǧalāl ad-Dīn as-Suyūṭī's (d. 911/1505) biography as the key driver for the subsequent attributions of late death dates, and gives details of Flügel's influential choice of 502/1108-1109. Reidel should however be read in the light of the corrective information on Ragib's works and references to them that I provide in the rest of this chapter. Riedel, "Searching for the Islamic episteme," 106-128.

tradition did not have access to or knowledge of the London manuscript of the *Quranic Glossary* that proves Ragib was alive in or before 409/1018.

Early Biographies

The first mention of Ragib by a third party is in Mufaḍḍal b. Saʿd b. al-Ḥusayn al-Māfarrūḫī's book *Kitāb Maḥāsin Iṣfahān* (*The Good Qualities of Isfahan*), written between 465/1072 and 485/1092.[118] Ragib appears only as a name ("Abū al-Qāsim ar-Rāġib") in a list of those Isfahanis who excelled in language-based disciplines.[119]

The second mention of Ragib comes in a compendium of "philosophers" biographies by Abū al-Ḥasan ʿAlī b. Zayd (Ibn Funduq) al-Bayhaqī (ca. 490/1097-565/1169).[120] This work was intended as a continuation and completion of an earlier compendium of philosophers, the *Ṣiwān al-Ḥikmah* (*The Wardrobe of Wisdom*), intended to preserve and share the sage aphorisms of Greek and Islamic philosophers working in a single tradition, from Anaxagoras and Pythagoras to contemporaries of Ragib in Baghdad and elsewhere.[121]

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[118] Paul, "The Histories of Isfahan," 117f.

[119] Al-Māfarrūḫī's description of this category of people reads:
> Those with extensive knowledge in grammar and desinential syntax (*iʿrāb*), who investigate rare morphological patterns and Bedouin dialects, who extemporize eye-opening poetry (*al-muqtaḍibīna li-l-asʿāri –l-mufattiḥah*), who invent admired poetic ideas in Arabic and Persian, who sign off on elegant compositions (*al-muwaqqiʿīna –l-muḥsinīna li-l-maʿānī –l-mustamlaḥah*), and who ease beautifully through dictation (*al-mutarassilīna –l-muġīdīna imlāʾan*).

al-Māfarrūḫī, *Maḥāsin Iṣfahān*, 32. Al-Māfarrūḫī's work was translated into Persian in the fourteenth century, for the reference to Ragib see ———, *Tarjumah-e Maḥāsen-e Eṣfahān az ʿArabī be Fārsī*, ed. ʿAbbās Iqbal, trans. Ḥusayn b. Muḥammad b. Abī ar-Riḍā Āvī (Tehran: Sāzemān-e Farhangī-ye Tafrīḥī-ye Šahrdārī-ye Iṣfahān, 2006). 159.

[120] Abū al-Ḥasan ʿAlī b. Zayd al-Bayhaqī, *Tārīḫ Ḥukamāʾ al-Islām [Tatimmat Siwān al-Ḥikmah]*, ed. Muḥammad Kurd ʿAlī (Damascus: Maṭbūʿāt al-Maǧmaʿ al-ʿIlmī al-ʿArabī, 1946). For details and an abbreviated paraphrase of 116 entries (Ragib is #62) see: Max Meyerhof, "ʿAli al-Bayhaqi's *Tatimmat Siwan al-Hikma*: A Biographical Work on Learned Men of the Islam," *Osiris* 8(1948).

[121] Muḥammad b. Ṭāhir as-Siǧistānī, *The Ṣiwān al-Ḥikmah of Abū Sulaimān as-Sijistānī: Arabic text, introduction and indices*, ed. D.M. Dunlop (The Hague: Mouton, 1979). Abū Sulaymān as-Siǧistānī (ca. 300/912-375/985). For

Al-Bayhaqī brings the list up to date with biographies of poets, physicians and other scholars from "all the different races and religions of the Near East", many of whom were known to him or to his father.[122] They include al-Fārābī and Abū Bišr Mattā (see above), the Iḫwān aṣ-Ṣafāʾ (see below), and al-Bayhaqī's contemporaries. There are relatively few scholars working in the traditional Islamic disciplines of lexicography and Quranic exegesis other than Ragib, whose entry makes the claim that he combined religious law (*aš-šarīʿah*) and philosophical wisdom (*al-ḥikmah*) and that he was particularly proficient in the rational disciplines (*kāna ḥaẓẓuhū min –l-maʿqūlāti akṯar*).[123] Al-Bayhaqī then quotes at length from Ragib's *Analysis of the Two Creations and Attainment of the Two Happinesses*.[124]

Works [125]

Observations

Ragib's best known and most easily accessible works, the *Quranic* Glossary, *Path to Nobility*, and *Littérateurs' Ripostes*, provide a valid but incomplete representation of his ideas. The lacunae are felt most strongly with regard to his sectarian positions, which have attracted a

manuscript details and corroborative texts and editions see: Dimitri Gutas, "Review: The *Ṣiwān Al-Ḥikma* Cycle of Texts," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 102, no. 4 (1982). For further detail and a persuasive questioning of the work's attribution to Abū Sulaymān see: Wadad al-Qadi, "*Kitab Ṣiwan al-Ḥikma*: Structure, Composition, Authorship and Sources," *Der Islam* 58(1981).

[122] Meyerhof, "*Tatimmat Siwan al-Hikma*," 131, 132.

[123] al-Bayhaqī, *Tārīḫ Ḥukamāʾ al-Islām*, 112.

[124] Ragib, *Analysis of the Two Creations*. Al-Bayhaqī quotes from pages 27-28 (authorial introduction), 63 (chapter eight), 117 (chapter eighteen), 126 (chapter twenty), 143 (chapter twenty-four), 147 (chapter twenty-five), 153 (twenty-seven), and 178-180 (chapter thirty-two).

[125] This list supersedes my entry for Ragib in *Essays in Arabic Literary Biography* entry, although *Essays* does provide succinct epitomes of the content of his works. Alexander Key, "al-Rāghib al-Iṣfahānī," in *Essays in Arabic Literary Biography I*, ed. Mary StGermain and Terri de Young (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2011).

great deal of speculation over the centuries despite being clearly laid out in *On Creeds*. The problem is that manuscripts of *On Creeds* were not widespread, and printed copies of the work are so rare today as to almost require their cataloguing. A similar problem exists with regard to his *Exegesis*, and his work on poetics remains unpublished and only exists in a single manuscript. The details below will establish Ragib's authorship of *On Creeds* and the *Exegesis*, but the fact remains that his reception and reputation continue to be dominated by the vagaries of print runs and manuscript transmissions.[126]

Exegesis of the Quran (*Tafsīr*)

Ragib's *Exegesis* includes a methodological introduction and is extant up to the end of Quran 5:120 (al-Māʾidah). Editors have used the titles *Tafsīr ar-Rāġib al-Iṣfahānī* (*Ragib al-Iṣfahānī's Exegesis*) and *Ǧāmiʿ at-Tafāsīr* (*Collection of Exegeses*).[127] In the introduction to *The Path to the Nobilities of the Revelation* (*Kitāb aḏ-Ḏarīʿah ilā Makārim aš-Šarīʿah*) Ragib mentions having written a work called *Taḥqīq al-Bayān fī Taʾwīl al-Qurʾān* (*An Investigation of Clarity in Quranic Interpretation*) in which he had discussed the difference between the Quran's ethical qualities and legal judgements,[128] but I have been unable to locate any such discussion in the extant parts of his *Exegesis*.

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[126] It is impossible to purchase a copy of *On Creeds* or the *Exegesis* in the Arabic-speaking world, and they are held in only a very limited number of libraries in Europe and America. The problems this causes are demonstrated in as-Sārīsī's ignorance of al-ʿAġalī's edition of *On Creeds*, Mīr Lawḥī's apparent lack of access to as-Sārīsī's scholarship, and the fact that aš-Šidī's edition of the Exegesis published in Riyad in 2003 appears to have fallen into a black hole.

[127] ṢafwānʿAdnād Dāwūdī prefers *Ǧāmiʿ at-Tafsīr*, but the point may be moot because the reference to this title comes in a work that may well not be Ragib's. Abū al-Qāsim al-Ḥusayn b. Muḥammad al-Iṣfahānī Ragib, *[Quranic Glossary] Mufradāt Alfāẓ al-Qurʾān al-Karīm*, ed. Ṣafwān ʿAdnān Dāwūdī (Beirut / Damascus: Dār al-Qalam / Dār aš-Šāmīyah, 1992; repr., Qum: Ṭalīʿat an-Nūr, 2006). 8. Ḥāfīẓ Muḥammad Ḫālid Ṣiddīqī, "A critical edition of Imām Rāġib al-Iṣfahānī's manuscript "Durrat al-Taʾwīl wa Ġurrat al-Tanzīl fī-l-Ayāt al-Mutašābihah wa-l-Mutaʾaḫirah"" (Ph.D. Thesis, University of London, School of Oriental and African Studies, 1977), 469 re. Quran 109 (al-Kāfirūn).

[128] Abū al-Qāsim al-Ḥusayn b. Muḥammad al-Iṣfahānī Ragib, *[The Path to the Nobilities of the Revelation] Kitāb aḏ-Ḏarīʿah ilā Makārim aš-Šarīʿah*, ed. Abū al-Yazīd al-ʿAġamī (Cairo: Dār as-Salām, 2007). 59. Ali Reza

The methodological introduction has been published three times: as an appendix to al-Qāḍī

ʿAbd al-Ǧabbār's *Tanzīh al-Qurʾān ʿan al-Maṭāʿin* (*Freeing the Quran from its Calumnies*)

edited by Muḥammad Saʿīd ar-Rāfiʿī (Cairo: al-Maṭbaʿah al-Ǧamālīyah, 1911); as an appendix

to Ṣalāḥ ad-Dīn ʿAbd al-Laṭīf an-Nāhī's *al-Ḥawālid min Ārāʾ ar-Rāġib al-Iṣfahānī fī Falsafat al-*

Aḫlāq wa-t-Tašrīʿ wa-t-Taṣawwuf (*Selections of Ragib's Opinions on the Philosophies of Ethics,*

Legislation, and Sufism); and by Aḥmad Ḥasan Farḥāt as *Muqaddimat Ǧāmiʿ at-Tafāsīr* (*The*

Introduction to the Collection of Exegeses) with the addition of the exegesis of Quran 1:1 (al-

Fātiḥah) to Quran 2:5 (al-Baqarah).[129] The section Quran 2:5 to Quran 3:1 (Āl ʿImrān) has been

imperfectly published online,[130] and the remainder is the subject of two diligent theses at Umm

al-Qurā University in Mecca by ʿĀdil b. ʿAlī aš-Šidī (Ph.D., published) and Hind Bint

Muḥammad b. Zāhid Sardār (M.A., unpublished).[131]

The primary manuscript for the bulk of the *Exegesis* is Carullah 84 in the Süleymaniye

Library in Istanbul. It is undated, acephalous, and stops suddenly at Quran 5:120 without a

colophon. Corroboration is found primarily in other Istanbul manuscripts: Ayasofya 212, Atıf

Efendi 362-002, and Laleli 171 in the Süleymaniye, and Emanet Hazine 1616 in the Topkapı

Karabulut suggests that *Taḥqīq al-Bayān* is an alternative title for the *Exegesis*, but without any supporting evidence. Ali Reza Karabulut, *Muʿǧam al-Maḫṭūṭāt al-Mawǧūdah fī Maktabāt Istānbūl wa Ānāṭūlī*, 3 vols. (Qayṣarī, Turkey Dār al-ʿAqabah, 2005). 1:470.

[129] Ṣalāḥ ad-Dīn ʿAbd al-Laṭīf an-Nāhī, *al-Ḥawālid min Ārāʾ ar-Rāġib al-Iṣfahānī fī Falsafat al-Aḫlāq wa-t-Tašrīʿ wa-t-Taṣawwuf* (Amman / Beirut: Dār ʿAmmār / Dār al-Ǧīl, 1987). Ragib, *Methodological Introduction and Exegesis ed. Farḥāt*.

[130] Muḥammad ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz Basyūnī's 1999 Ph.D. dissertation in the Faculty of Arts at Tanta University, Egypt is an edition of Ragib's *Exegesis* from the methodological introduction to the end of Quran 2:286. It is to the best of my knowledge only available through the online database http://shamela.ws, where it has been entered as text and integrated with the editions of aš-Šidī and Sardār. The consequent absence of Basyūnī's introduction or scholarly apparatus makes evaluation of his work impossible, but the text at http://shamela.ws has significant departures and omissions (often at verse ends) from Carullah 84 and Ayasofya 212 and should not be relied upon.

[131] Ragib, *Exegesis ed. aš-Šidī*. ———, *[Exegesis of Quran 4:114 to 5:120] Tafsīr ar-Rāġib al-Iṣfahānī*, ed. Hind Bint Muḥammad b. Zāhid Sardār, 2 vols. (Mecca: Ǧāmiʿat Umm al-Qurā, 2001), M.A. Thesis.

Palace.[132] Ayasofya 212 starts at the beginning of the methodological introduction and finishes with no colophon at Quran 2:223. It appears to have been collated against Carullah 84. Atıf Efendi 362-002 contains the full methodological introduction and finishes with no colophon at Quran 2:216. It varies from both Ayasofya 212 and Carullah 84 and appears to have been collated against neither. Laleli 171 and Emanet Hazine 1616 both contain the methodological introduction and end at Quran 2:6. The latter was used by Farḥāt, while aš-Šidī and Sardār both use Carullah 84, Ayasofya 212, and Atıf Efendi 362-002.[133] Carullah 84 appears to be the oldest of the manuscripts (angular *nasḫ* scholar's bookhand, Quranic verses in larger *tawqīʿ* script, dark brown paper, approximately eleventh to fifteenth centuries?). Ayasofya 212 could be placed somewhat later (rounded *nasḫ* scholar's bookhand, Quranic verses overlined in red, white paper), and the remainder of the manuscripts mentioned above appear to be from the Ottoman period (scholars' *nastaʿlīq* bookhands, illuminated headpieces, rule-borders and frames).

Internal references show that the *Exegesis* was once a coherent whole. In exegesis of Quran 2:106 Ragib writes that "the essence of abrogation and the difference between it and specification has been discussed above at the outset of this book" and that this is an accurate reflection of the chapter in the methodological introduction on "requisite knowledge of the difference between abrogation and specification".[134] In exegesis of Quran 4:127 (an-Nisāʾ) Ragib writes that "the fact that a single action can correctly be attributed, with different expressions, to

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[132] See the Appendix for an annotated listing of all *Tafsīr* manuscripts.

[133] Ragib, *Methodological Introduction and Exegesis ed. Farḥāt*, 16-24 (with plates). ———, *Exegesis ed. aš-Šidī*, 388-400 (with plates). ———, *Exegesis ed. Sardār*, 136-145 (with plates).

[134] *qad taqaddama –l-kalāmu fī māʾīyati –n-nasḫi wa-l-farqi baynahū wa-bayna –l-taḫṣīṣi fī ṣadr –l-kitāb*. ———. *Ms. of Tafsīr [Exegesis of Quran 1:1 to Quran 5:120]*. Carullah 84 (dated ?), Süleymaniye, Istanbul. f.84b. *faṣlun fīmā yaḥtāǧu ilayhi fī-t-tafsīri min –l-farqi bayna –n-nasḫi wa-t-taḫṣīṣ*. ———, *Methodological Introduction and Exegesis ed. Farḥāt*, 82. ———, "Methodological Introduction ed. Nāḥī," 114.

two different agents has been established at the outset of this book". This is an accurate
reflection of his discussion in the methodological introduction.[135] Internal references also
confirm that Ragib is the author of the *Exegesis*. He refers to his *The Path to the Nobilities* at one
point,[136] and the discussions and definitions of key terms are almost identical to those in his
Quranic Glossary,[137] and *The Path to the Nobilities*.[138]

   Aš-Šidī has demonstrated that Ragib's *Exegesis* was used as a source by Šaraf ad-Dīn al-
Ḥusayn b. Muḥammad aṭ-Ṭībī (d. 743/1324), Abū Ḥayyān Aṯīr ad-Dīn al-Ġarnāṭī al-Andalusī
(Granada to Cairo, 654/1256-745/1344), Abū ʿAbdallāh Badr ad-Dīn Muḥammad az-Zarkašī
(Cairo, 745/1344-794/1392), and Ǧalāl ad-Dīn ʿAbd ar-Raḥmān as-Suyūṭī (Cairo, 849/1445-
911/1505).[139] Each of these authors quotes Ragib by name, and their quotes can be traced back to
the *Exegesis* manuscripts.[140] As-Suyūṭī quotes, at length, only the methodological introduction.
He quotes sections that are not quoted by az-Zarkašī, showing that he engaged independently
with Ragib's work.[141] Aṭ-Ṭībī was known for his strong rejection of Hellenistic philosophy,[142]

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[135] ———, *Methodological Introduction and Exegesis ed. Farḥāt*, 63f. ———, "Methodological Introduction ed.
Nāhī," 101f.

[136] ———, *Exegesis ed. aš-Šidī*, 131. ḥasaba mā ḏukira fī kitābi –ḏ-ḏariʿati ilā makārimi –š-šarīʿah. ———.
Carullah 84. f.297b.

[137] ———, *Exegesis ed. aš-Šidī*, 131-134. See also the definitions of *al-kufr* and *al-qawl*. ———. *Carullah 84*.
ff.14b-15a, ff.17b-18a. ———, *Quranic Glossary*, 688, 714.

[138] ———, "Methodological Introduction ed. Nāhī," 102-104; ———, *Methodological Introduction and Exegesis
ed. Farḥāt*, 63-65; ———, *The Path to the Nobilities*, 297-298.

[139] ———, *Exegesis ed. aš-Šidī*, 121-134.

[140] Ibid. For example Abū Ḥayyān's exegesis of Quran 4:69 accurately quotes twelve lines of Ragib's text (*qāla ar-
Rāǧib…*). Muḥammad b. Yūsuf Abū Ḥayyān al-Andalusī, *Tafsīr al-Baḥr al-Muḥīṭ*, ed. ʿĀdil Aḥmad ʿAbd al-
Mawǧūd and ʿAlī Muḥammad Muʿawwad, 8 vols. (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmīyah, 1993). 3:300. Ragib. *Carullah
84*. ff.475b-476a. ———, *Exegesis ed. aš-Šidī*, 1311-1312.

[141] As-Suyūṭī: *qāla –l-Iṣbahānī fī-tafsīrih…*with regard to Quranic inimitability. Ǧalāl ad-Dīn as-Suyūṭī, *al-Itqān fī
ʿUlūm al-Qurʾān*, ed. Muḥammad Abū al-Faḍl Ibrāhīm, 4 vols. (Beirut: al-Maktabah al-ʿAṣrīyah, 1997). 4:10-12.
Cf. Ragib, *Methodological Introduction and Exegesis ed. Farḥāt*, 104-109. ———, "Methodological Introduction

and we therefore already have indications that in the centuries after his death Ragib's varied

portfolio of works would appeal both to those who collected philosophers such as al-Bayhaqī,

and those like aṭ-Ṭībī who rejected them.

Finally, Ragib's *Exegesis* is mentioned in two bibliographical works. Abū aṭ-Ṭāhir

Muḥammad b. Yaʿqūb al-Fīrūzābādī (729/1329-817/1415) described it as "large, in ten bound

volumes, extremely detailed".[143] Kâtip Çelebi (1017/1609-1067/1657) wrote that it was one of

the sources of Nāṣir ad-Dīn ʿAbdallāh b. ʿUmar al-Bayḍāwī's (d. ca. 710/1310-11) famous

Quranic exegesis, *Anwār at-Tanzīl wa-Asrār at-Taʾwīl* (*The Lights of Revelation and the Secrets

of Interpretation*).[144]

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ed. Nāhī," 128-131. This is misattributed to Ibn Baḥr al-Iṣfahānī (Abū Muslim Muḥammad, 254/868-322/934) by van Ess: van Ess, *Theologie und Gesellschaft*, 4:610. For Ibn Baḥr, whom Ragib quotes on a number of occasions in the *Exegesis*, see: Wilferd Madelung, "Abū Moslem Eṣfahānī," in *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, ed. Ehsan Yarshater (New York: Iranicaonline Website, 2011); Ragib, *Exegesis ed. aš-Šidī*, 160f; van Ess, *Theologie und Gesellschaft*, 4:250. As-Suyūṭī: *qāla –l-Iṣbahānī fī tafsīrih…* with regard to the difference between exegesis and interpretation (*tafsīr* and *taʾwīl*). as-Suyūṭī, *al-Itqān*, 4:168. Ragib, *Methodological Introduction and Exegesis ed. Farḥāt*, 47-48. ———, "Methodological Introduction ed. Nāhī," 92. As-Suyūṭī: *qāla –l-Iṣbahānī…*with regard to the nobility of the discipline of exegesis. as-Suyūṭī, *al-Itqān*, 4:173. Ragib, *Methodological Introduction and Exegesis ed. Farḥāt*, 91-92. ———, "Methodological Introduction ed. Nāhī," 118-119. Cf. Badr ad-Dīn Muḥammad az-Zarkašī, *al-Burhān fī ʿUlūm al-Qurʿān*, ed. Muḥammad Abū al-Faḍl Ibrāhīm, 4 vols. (Cairo: Dār Iḥyāʾ al-Kutub al-ʿArabīyah, 1957). 468-169 (index). In all these cases as-Suyūṭī's quotations differ slightly from the Istanbul manuscripts, including those used by Farḥāt and an-Nāhī. These references are partly missed by aš-Šidī and wholly missed by Reidel. Ragib, *Exegesis ed. aš-Šidī*, 130. Reidel, "Searching for the Islamic episteme," 122-123.

[142] *kāna … šadīdu -r-raddi ʿalā –l-falāsifah…* Aḥmad b. ʿAlī al-ʿAsqalānī Ibn Ḥağar, *ad-Durar al-Kāminah fī Aʿyān al-Miʾah aṭ-Ṯāminah*, 4 vols. (Beirut: Dār al-Ǧīl, 1993). 2:69. Kaḥḥālah, *Muʿğam al-Muʾallifīn*, 1:639.

[143] *la-hū at-tafsīru –l-kabīru fī ʿašarati asfārin ġāyatu –t-taḥqīq*. Muḥammad b. Yaʿqūb al-Fīrūzābādī, *al-Bulġah fī Tarāğim Aʾimmat an-Naḥw wa-l-Luġah*, ed. Muḥammad al-Maṣrī (Damascus: Dār Saʿd ad-Dīn, 2000). 122. Ragib, *Exegesis ed. aš-Šidī*, 121. Cf. Reidel, "Searching for the Islamic episteme," 124.

[144] Kâtip Čelebi, *Kašf aẓ-Ẓunūn ʿan Asāmī al-Kutub wa-al-Funūn*, ed. Gustav Flügel, 7 vols. (London: R. Bentley for the Oriental Translation Fund of Great Britain and Ireland, 1964). 2:361. This assertion has been doubted (Reidel, "Searching for the Islamic episteme," 123-124.), and al-Bayḍāwī does indeed not cite his sources, but a cursory review shows that a number of discussions share the same contours and examples. For example: Nāṣir ad-Dīn ʿAbdallāh al-Bayḍāwī, *Anwār at-Tanzīl wa-Asrār at-Taʾwīl al-Maʿrūf bi-Tafsīr al-Bayḍāwī*, ed. Muḥammad ʿAbd ar-Raḥmān Marʿašlī, 5 in 2 vols. (Beirut: Dār Iḥyāʾ at-Turāṯ al-ʿArabī, 1998). 33f. Cf. Ragib, *Methodological Introduction and Exegesis ed. Farḥāt*, 145f. However, it is in the nature of exegesis that authors' discussions share the same contours, and consequently nothing can be proven. Mīr Lawḥi has shown a number of correspondences between al-Bayḍāwī's *Anwār* and Ragib's *Quranic Glossary*. Mīr Lawḥi, *Rāġeb*, 212f.

Quranic Glossary (*Mufradāt Ġarīb al-Qurʾān al-Karīm*)

There is virtually no difference between the texts of London *Quranic Glossary* and the current preferred critical edition by Ṣafwān ʿAdnān Dāwūdī despite the intervening 974 years, and despite the fact that Dāwūdī did not use the London manuscript itself.[145] This is testament to the numerous and accurate transmissions of this work of Ragib's, which themselves reflect the work's popularity across the centuries. As can be seen from the list in the appendix, there are catalogued witnesses to this text in manuscript libraries from Patna to Michigan, and from Sana'a to Berlin. In a testament to the efforts of the Ottoman Empire, the majority are in Istanbul. Like Ragib's *Exegesis*, the *Quranic Glossary* is replete with lexicographical data, often with a great deal of overlap between the two, for when Ragib starts to discuss a verse in the *Exegesis*, he usually glosses the key terms first.[146] Again like the *Exegesis*, the *Quranic Glossary* was praised and used by, inter alia, az-Zarkašī and as-Suyūṭī.[147] The latter quotes the *Quranic Glossary* throughout his manual for exegetes as well as in his *al-Muzhir fī ʿUlūm al-Luġah* (*The Illumination of the Linguistic Sciences*).[148]

Ragib makes numerous references to his major ethical work, *The Path to the Nobilities*, in the *Quranic Glossary*.[149]

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[145] The only aspect of the work that tends to differ is the title: *Mufradāt Alfāẓ al-Qurʾān*, *Muʿǧam Mufradāt Alfāẓ al-Qurʾān*, *Mufradāt Ġarīb al-Qurʾān*. See Key, "al-Rāghib."

[146] See note 137.

[147] Ragib, *Exegesis ed. aš-Šidī*, 136. Mīr Lawḥī, *Rāġeb*, 223-224.

[148] as-Suyūṭī, *al-Itqān*, 4:292 (index). ———, *al-Muzhir fī ʿUlūm al-Luġah wa-Anwāʾihā*, ed. ʿAlī Muḥammad Baġāwī, Muḥammad Abū al-Faḍl Ibrāhīm, and Muḥammad Aḥmad Ǧād al-Mawlā, 2 vols. (Cairo: Dār Iḥyāʾ al-Kutub al-ʿArabīyah, 1957). 1:184, 1:201.

[149] For example: "I have indicated in *The Path to the Nobilities*…", "I have mentioned in *The Path to the Nobilities*…", "I have explained in *The Path to the Nobilities*…" Ragib, *Quranic Glossary*, 54, 226, 714, 1186 (index). ———. *Mufradāt al-Ḫaṭīb Collection*. f.1b, f.37b, ff.161a-161b. One might be tempted to guess that the *Quranic Glossary* was written after *The Path to the Nobilities* and before the *Exegesis*.

On Creeds (*al-Iʿtiqādāt*)

In *On Creeds* Ragib reviews the standard topics of theological disagreement and presents his own beliefs. He lays out "the Sunni consensus", and argues that Sunni beliefs are supported by proofs reasoned from the Quran and Sunna. At times, this project leads him to engage in heresiography, wherein he criticises excessive anthropomorphism, excessive partisanship in favour of Ali, and the Muʿtazilah. He distinguishes himself from the Ašāʿirah, and situates himself in a "traditionist" camp called *ahl al-aṯar*, that is itself distinguished from the partisans of Hadith (*ahl al-ḥadīṯ*).[150]

Unlike the majority of Ragib's works, *On Creeds* has been published only once, in 1988 by Šamrān al-ʿAǧalī working in Tlemcen, Algeria.[151] Al-ʿAǧalī took the title *al-Iʿtiqādāt* (*The Creeds*) from the incipit, while the two manuscripts with titles have *Risālah fī-l-Iʿtiqād* (*Epistle on Creeds*) and *Kitāb fī-l-ʿAqāʾid* (*Book on Creeds*).[152] He produced a critical edition from three of the four known manuscripts (detailed in the Appendix) but the resultant codex printed in Beirut by Muʿassasat al-Ašraf is marred by numerous and substantive errors and confusions. Al-ʿAǧalī struggled to integrate the differing structures of the manuscripts; a task which the Appendix shows was indeed a difficult one. Over half of what may be the oldest witness (Āstān-e Quds-e Rażāvī 56) is missing and there appears to be substantial confusion in chapter two of what might otherwise be the best witness (Chester Beatty AR 5277), which is itself undated. Al-

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[150] These affiliations will be addressed below.

[151] It had previously been edited as an M.A. thesis by Aḫtar Ǧamāl Muḥammad Luqmān, using only the Chester Beatty manuscript. Abū al-Qāsim al-Ḥusayn b. Muḥammad al-Iṣfahānī Ragib, *[On Creeds] Kitāb al-Iʿtiqād*, ed. Aḫtar Ǧamāl Muḥammad Luqmān (Mecca: Ǧamiʿat Umm al-Qurā, 1981-1982), M.A. Thesis. See also: ———, *Quranic Glossary*, 11. ———, *[On Creeds] al-Iʿtiqādāt*, ed. Šamrān al-ʿAǧalī (Beirut: Muʾassasat al-Ašraf, 1988). 12.

[152] *raġabtu raġbatan ṣādiqatan an aʿmala risālatan ubayyinu fīhā anwāʾa –l-iʿtiqādāt…*("I had a true desire to write an epistle in which I would explain the different creeds…"). ———, *On Creeds*, 10, 14. See Appendix for manuscript details.

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ʿAġalī is nevertheless the only person to reproduce the lines of the manuscripts' texts in a printed form and thereby make them accessible to a wider audience. A new critical edition remains a desideratum.

In a section of the book that is extant in the Mashhad and Dublin manuscripts, Ragib refers to his *Path to Nobility* and thereby establishes that *On Creeds* is indeed his*:* "…for I have explained this in the book *The Path to the Nobilities…*".[153] In *The Path to the Nobilities*, when discussing the number of sects into which the Muslim community has split, he may refer to *On Creeds* as "a separate composition" of his in which this subject is explained.[154]

The Path to the Nobilities of the Revelation (*Kitāb aḏ-Ḏarīʿah ilā Makārim aš-Šarīʿah*)

This is Ragib's major ethical treatise, it demonstrates his catholic synthesis of Islamic, Aristotelian and pre-conquest Iranian ideas, and it has at its heart an ambitious goal for humanity. *The Path to the Nobilities* is an account of the ways in which human beings can fulfil their divine potential and deserve to be described as God's vicegerents (*ḫalīfah*, pl. *ḫulafāʾ*) on the earth. It has been published numerous times since the late nineteenth century and translated into Persian and English.[155] Of all Ragib's works it has attracted the most attention in European-

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[153] *fa-qad bayyantuhā fī kitābi –ḏ-Ḏarīʿati ilā Makārimi –š-Šarīʿah…* ibid., 62. ———. *Ms. of al-Iʿtiqādāt [On Creeds]*. Āstān-e Quds Reżāvī 56 (dated 1280), Āstān-e Quds-e Rażāvī, Mashhad. f.75a. ———. *Ms. of al-Iʿtiqādāt [On Creeds]*. AR 5277 (dated ?), Chester Beatty, Dublin. f.96b.

[154] *wa-qad ḏukira ḏālika wa-buyyina fī risālatin mufradah*. ———, *The Path to the Nobilities*, 191. Cf. ———, *On Creeds*, 23-24. *On Creeds* may also be the *Kitāb al-Īmān wa-l-Kufr* (*Book of Belief and Unbelief*) that appears in the bibliographic tradition. For example: Muḥsin al-Amīn al-Husaynī al-ʿĀmilī, *Aʿyān aš-Šīʿah* (Damascus: Maṭbaʿat Ibn Zaydūn, 1948). 27:220.

[155] In Persian as *Rāh-e Buzurgvārī dar Islām: tarjume-ye al-Dharīʿah…* (Tabriz: Surūsh, 1958), and *Karāne-ye Saʿādat: bakhshe mabsūt dar arkān-e akhlāq-e Islāmī*, ed. & trans. Mahdī Shams al-Dīn (Qum: 1997). In English as *The path to virtue: the ethical philosophy of al-Rāghib al-Iṣfahānī: an annotated trans., with critical introduction, of Kitāb al-Dharīah ilā Makārim al-Sharīah* [chapter one and introduction only], trans. Yasien Mohamed (Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia: International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilization (ISTAC), International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM), 2006), and Yasien Mohamed "Knowledge and Purification of the Soul. An Annotated Translation of al-Isfahānī's Kitāb al-Dharīʿah" [introduction and incomplete chapter one only]. *Journal of Islamic*

language scholarship.[156] Wilferd Madelung was the first to demonstrate that over half of Abū Ḥamīd Muḥammad al-Ġazālī's (450/1058-505/1111) *Mīzān al-ʿAmal* (*The Scale of Action*) is taken unattributed from Ragib's *The Path to the Nobilities*.[157] Al-Ġazālī's working method, in which he reworked his ideas from book to book, means that his magnum opus *Iḥyāʾ ʿUlūm ad-Din* (*Revival of the Religious Sciences*) also incorporates a great deal, equally unattributed, of Ragib's ethical thought.

As noted above, Ragib refers to *The Path to the Nobilities* in his *Exegesis*, *Quranic Glossary*, and *On Creeds*.

Analysis of the Two Creations and Attainment of the Two Happinesses (*Tafṣīl an-Naš'atayn wa Taḥṣīl as-Saʿādatayn*)

Ragib's shorter ethical treatise has much more Quranic quotation than *The Path to the Nobilities*, and is shorn of many of its complex epistemologies of reason and knowledge in favour of rhetorical phrases and repetition. It may have been intended for use in teaching, or indeed as a text from which to preach. Its most important slogan is that human reason (*ʿaql*) and divine revelation (*šarʿ*) are mutually dependent and jointly productive (chapter 18). Despite its

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Studies 6 (1995) 1:51-75.

[156] Wilferd Madelung, "Ar-Rāġib al-Iṣfahānī und die Ethik al-Ġazālīs," in *Islamwissenschaftliche Abhandlungen Fritz Meier zum 60sten Geburtstag*, ed. R. Gramlich (Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner, 1974; reprint, *Religious Schools and Sects in Medieval Islam*. London: Variorum Reprints, 1985). Hans Daiber, "Griechische Ethik in islamischem Gewande. Das Beispiel von Rāġib al-Iṣfahānī (11. Jh.)," *Historia Philosophiae Medii Aevi* 1(1991). Yasien Mohamed, "The Ethical Philosophy of al-Rāghib al-Iṣfahānī," *Journal of Islamic Studies (Oxford)* 6, no. 1 (1995). For details of editions and translations see: Key, "al-Rāghib." For details of the Persian translations see: Mīr Lawḥī, *Rāġeb*, 256-264. For details of the relationship of the printed editions to each other see: Yasien Mohamed, "Knowledge and Purification of the Soul. An annotated translation of Iṣfahānī's *Kitāb al-Dharīʿa ilā Makārim al-Sharīʿa* (58-76; 89-92)" *Journal of Islamic Studies (Oxford)* 9, no. 1 (1998): 66-67. Cf. Abū al-Qāsim al-Ḥusayn b. Muḥammad al-Iṣfahānī Ragib and Yasien Mohamed, *The Path to Virtue: the ethical philosophy of al-Rāghib al-Iṣfahānī: an annotated trans., with critical introduction, of [Chapter One of] Kitāb al-Dharīah ilā Makārim al-Sharīah*, trans. Yasien Mohamed (Kuala Lumpur: International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilization (ISTAC), International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM), 2006).

[157] Madelung, "Ar-Rāġib." Mīr Lawḥī, *Rāġeb*, 250-256. NB: *The Path to the Nobilities* is quoted by name by az-Zarkašī: *qāla –r-Rāġibu fī-ḏ-Ḏarīʿah*… az-Zarkašī, *al-Burhān*, 3:345. Cf. Ragib, *The Path to the Nobilities*, 144.

popular tone, the *Analysis* is also heavier on Hellenistic philosophical terminology than any of

Ragib's other works. For example, he describes God as "necessary of existence" (*wāǧib al-*

wuǧūd), a phrase that would come to be associated with his more famous contemporary

Avicenna.[158] In its earliest extant manuscript (Yahuda 3555), the *Analysis* is copied together with

The Path to the Nobilities, and it is the work from which al-Bayhaqī quotes at length in his entry

on Ragib.[159]

Littérateurs' Ripostes and Poets' and Eloquent Men's Rejoinders (*Muḥāḍarāt al-Udabāʾ wa-Muḥāwarāt aš-Šuʿarāʾ wa-l-Bulaǧāʾ*)

Littérateurs' Ripostes is perhaps Ragib's best known work after the *Quranic Glossary*. It is

a literary anthology, a work of *adab*, a tightly structured, comprehensive and quality-controlled

selection of the most apt quotations and the best poetry for any one of the hundreds of situations

and subjects that make up its chapters, sub-chapters, and sub-sub-chapters. Although existing in

a number of manuscripts and printed a number of times, it has only recently been produced in a

critical edition with indexes. As-Sārīsī has a number of complaints about this edition by ʿAbd al-

Ḥamīd Murād, but its indexes nevertheless provide a great service.[160] Even before being indexed,

Littérateurs' Ripostes had been the subject of two Ph.D. dissertations in the United States, and its

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[158] ———, *Analysis of the Two Creations*, 40. See also: ———, *On Creeds*, 48, 56-58. ———, *Quranic Glossary*, 854. Robert Wisnovsky has highlighted Ragib's connection to Avicenna: Robert Wisnovsky, "One Aspect of the Avicennian Turn in Sunni Theology," *Arabic Science and Philosophy* 14(2004): 88-90. Cf. ———, *Avicenna's Metaphysics in Context*, vol. ` (London: Duckworth, 2003). 196f.

[159] al-Bayhaqī, *Tārīḫ Ḥukamāʾ al-Islām*, 112-113.

[160] Ragib, *Littérateurs' Ripostes*. as-Sārīsī, "Ḥawla Taḥqīq." Murād used three of the manuscripts detailed in the Appendix.

accessibility (both in terms of print runs and internal organisation) means that it has been used by many more scholars.[161]

There are no references in *Littérateurs' Ripostes* to any of Ragib's other works, nor do any of his other work in exegesis or creed refer to his *adab* compilations. We have to assume that the author of *Littérateur's Replies*, who lived around the end of the tenth century and was familiar with Isfahan, is the author of the *Quranic Glossary*, *On Creeds*, *The Path to the Nobilities*, and the *Exegesis*, who was alive at or before the start of the eleventh century, whose *Quranic Glossary* was purchased from Isfahan in 420/1029, and who had the same name. We are in good company making this assumption; as-Suyūṭī read both Ragib's *adab* (*Littérateurs' Ripostes*) and his exegesis (*Quranic Glossary*) and considered them to have one and the same author: "he has the *Quranic Glossary*, and *The Branches of Eloquence* [see below], and *Littérateurs' Ripostes*, and I have seen all three".[162]

The Confluence of Eloquence (*Maǧmaʿ al-Balāġah*)

The Confluence is a shorter, more technical and linguistic, *adab* compendium. It provides its reader with strings of related words, short phrases and linguistically significant snatches of poetry, rather than the somewhat longer stories and quotations of *Littérateurs' Ripostes*, which themselves still rarely run beyond a short paragraph. The editor of the only published edition, as-Sārīsī notes substantial overlap between the two works.[163]

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[161] Stephanie Bowie Thomas, "The Concept of Muḥāḍara in the Adab Anthology with special reference to al-Rāghib al-Iṣfahānī's Muḥāḍarāt al-Udabāʾ" (Ph.D. Thesis, Harvard University, 2000). Riedel, "Searching for the Islamic episteme."

[162] *la-hū Mufradātu –l-Qurʾāni wa-Afānīnu –l-Balāġati wa-l-Muḥāḍarātu waqaftu ʿalā –ṯ-ṯalāṯah*. as-Suyūṭī, *Buġyat al-Wuʿāh*, 2:297. As-Suyūṭī is also credited with an abridgement of *Littérateurs' Ripostes* (see Appendix for manuscript reference).

[163] Ragib, *Confluence of Eloquence*, 1:17-18.

Ragib on Innovative Figures of Speech (*Kitāb min Kalām ar-Rāġib fī-l-Badīʿ*)

Existing in only a single manuscript in The Landberg Collection at Yale University's Beinecke Library, the manual of poetics *Ragib on Innovative Figures of Speech* has usually been referred to, on the rare occasions when it has been mentioned in European or Arabic-language scholarship, as *The Branches of Eloquence* (*Afānīn al-Balāġah*). This is because Count Carlo Landberg (1848-1924), the eminent Swedish arabist who donated the manuscript to Yale, connected its subject matter of poetics to the title *The Branches of Eloquence* (*Afānīn al-Balāġah*) attributed to Ragib by Kâtip Çelebi, of which no other manuscripts are known.[164] However, the title *Kitāb min Kalām ar-Rāġib fī-l-Badīʿ* is found on the title page of the manuscript in the same hand as the textblock. It is perhaps more likely, though equally unproven, that *The Branches of Eloquence* was an alternative title for *The Confluence of Eloquence*. The attribution of this work to Ragib rests only on its content, style, and his name being on the title page.

Abridgement of 'The Reform of Speech' by Ibn as-Sikkīt (*Muḫtaṣar Iṣlāḥ al-Manṭiq li-Ibn as-Sikkīt*)

Like *Ragib on Innovative Figures of Speech*, this work remains unedited. Abū Yūsuf Yaʿqūb b. Isḥāq Ibn as-Sikkīt (d. ca. 244/858) had a particular concern for lexicography and semantic nuances,[165] and Ragib epitomised his *Reform of Speech*, which is in large part a review and analysis of morphological patterns. Ragib wrote in the introduction:

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[164] Çelebi, *Kašf aẓ-Ẓunūn*, 1:370.

[165] Régis Blachère, "Origine de la théorie des adʾdād," in *L'Ambivalence dans la culture arabe*, ed. Jean Paul Charnay (Paris: Éditions Anthropos, 1967), 398.

My approach [to *The Reform of Speech*] has been to extract the essence and remove the lines of poetry adduced as evidence. For each long chapter containing repetitions, I have provided a revision in alphabetical order, starting with the letter *hamzah* and then the letter *bāʾ*. The repeated material has consequently been erased. For those expressions, in a single chapter, that conveyed the same idea, I have organised them so that you no longer need repeated explanations. For the different morphological structures such as *faʿala* and *fuʿila*, I have reduced their categories so that each occurs just once, and their explanations are dealt with together. This process has resulted in acquired memorization and a proximity to comprehension. Success lies with God.[166]

The attribution of this epitome to Ragib rests on the single manuscript in Cairo (see Appendix).

On the Difference between the Words 'One' and 'Absolute One' (*Risālah fī Ḏikr al-Wāḥid wa-l-Aḥad*)

This short lexicographical and theological epistle has been edited by as-Sārīsī from a single Istanbul manuscript,[167] the title page of which is the only proof available for its attribution to Ragib, other than similarities in style and content with his other works (see, for example, the discussion in the Appendix of a passage on the word 'one' in the Āstān-e Quds-e Raẓāvī 56 copy of *On Creeds*).

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[166]Ragib's text as reproduced by Ibrāhīm reads:
> *ʿamadtu ilayhi wa-staḫraġtu ḫulāṣatahū wa-aʿfaytuhū min ḏikri –l-abyāti –l-mustašhadi bi-hā wa-ʿamadtu ilā kulli bābin ṭawīlin kāna yaqaʿu fīhi –t-takrīrātu fa-ḥarrartuhū ʿalā tartībi ḥurūfi –l-muʿǧami fa-qadamtu mā awwalahū –l-hamzata ṯumma –l-bāʾa fa-fī ḏālika suqūṭu –l-mukarrari wa-mā kāna min –l-alfāẓi bi-maʿnan wāḥidin fī-l-bābi –l-wāḥidi naẓamtuhā li-tastaġniya ʿan takrīri tafsīrihā wa-mā kāna min abniyatin muḫtalifatin ka-faʿala wa-fuʿila* [patterns unvowelled in text] *–qtaṣartu fī katbihā ʿalā dafʿatin wāḥidatin wa-aġaztu tafsīra ǧamīʿihā wa-fī ḏālika taḥṣīlu –l-ḥifẓi wa-qurbu –t-tanāwuli wa-bi-llāhi –t-tawfīq.*

Muḥī ad-Dīn Tawfīq Ibrāhīm, *Ibn as-Sikkīt al-Luġawī (M.A. Thesis, Cairo University)* (Baghdad: Printed with the assistance of Baghdad University, 1969). 165-169.

[167] Abū al-Qāsim al-Ḥusayn b. Muḥammad al-Iṣfahānī Ragib, "[On the Difference Between the Words 'One' and 'Absolute One'] Risālah fī Ḏikr al-Wāḥid wa-l-Aḥad," in *[The Letters of ar-Rāġib] Rasāʾil ar-Rāġib al-Iṣfahānī*, ed. ʿUmar ʿAbd ar-Raḥmān as-Sārīsī (Irbid: ʿĀlam al-Kutub al-Ḥadīṯ, 2005). As-Sārīsī notes that he had published this epistle previously in Amman with Dār al-Furqān in 1992. ———, *Letters*, 3.

On the Correct Ways to Mix with People (*Risālah fī Ādāb al-Iḫtilāṭ bi-n-Nās*)

This epistle (with an internal contents section) of ethical *adab* has been edited by as-Sārīsī as above,[168] and by Mīr Lawḥī under the title *The Circumstances of Friendships and the Observances of Loves (Aḥwāl al-Mawaddāt wa-Murāʿāt al-Maḥabbāt)*.[169] The title page and similarities in style and content are the only proof available for its attribution to Ragib.

On Human Virtue Arising from the Disciplines of Knowledge (*Risālah anna Faḍīlat al-Insān bi-l-ʿUlūm*)

This ethical and epistemological epistle (with an internal contents section) has been edited by as-Sārīsī as above.[170] The title page and similarities in style and content are the only proof available for its attribution to Ragib.

On the Ordering of Intellectual Disciplines and of Worldly Actions (*Risālah fī Marātib al-ʿUlūm wa-l-Aʿmāl ad-Dunyawīyah*)

This shorter epistemological and theological epistle has been edited by as-Sārīsī as above.[171] The title page and similarities in style and content are the only proof available for its attribution to Ragib.

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[168] ———, "On the Correct Ways to Mix With People." As-Sārīsī notes that he had published this epistle previously in Amman with Dār al-Bašīr in 1998. ———, *Letters*, 3.

[169] See Appendix. Mīr Lawḥī's edition appeared in *Našrī-ye Dānešgāh-e Adabīyāt va-ʿUlūm-e Insānī-e Dānešgāh-e Iṣfahān* #4,5 in 1371(Š)/1992. Mīr Lawḥī, *Rāġeb*, 248 note 2 (and bibliography).

[170] Abū al-Qāsim al-Ḥusayn b. Muḥammad al-Iṣfahānī Ragib, "[On Human Virtue Arising from the Disciplines of Knowledge] Risālah anna Faḍīlat al-Insān bi-l-ʿUlūm," in *[The Letters of ar-] Rasāʾil ar-Rāġib al-Iṣfahānī*, ed. ʿUmar ʿAbd ar-Raḥmān as-Sārīsī (Irbid: ʿĀlam al-Kutub al-Ḥadīṯ, 2005). As-Sārīsī notes that he had published this epistle previously in the *Maǧallat Kullīyah ad-Dirāsāt al-Islāmīyah wa-l-ʿArabīyah* #22 in Dubai in December 2001. ———, *Letters*, 3.

[171] ———, "[On the Ordering of Intellectual Disciplines and of Worldly Actions] Risālah fī Marātib al-ʿUlūm wa-l-Aʿmāl ad-Dunyawīyah," in *[The Letters of ar-Rāġib] Rasāʾil ar-Rāġib al-Iṣfahānī*, ed. ʿUmar ʿAbd ar-Raḥmān as-Sārīsī (Irbid: ʿĀlam al-Kutub al-Ḥadīṯ, 2005). As-Sārīsī notes that he had published this epistle previously in *Afāq*

The Correct Way in Chess (*Adab aš-Šaṭranǧ*)

Recorded by Theodor Menzel as the title of a manuscript in Kazan, Russia.[172] It may be

related to the eight sub-sub-sections on chess (*šaṭranǧ*) in chapter eleven of *Littérateurs'*

Ripostes.[173]

On Knowledge of the Soul and On Invocation of God's Name (*Risālah fī-Maʿrifat an-Nafs,*

***Risālah fī-ḏ-Ḏikr*)**

These two titles are attributed to Ragib in the catalogue entry for a single manuscript

containing 145 works in Istanbul. During my visit to the Süleymaniye the manuscript was being

repaired and I was only able to consult a scanned image, the quality of which was insufficient to

determine the text of these works, which appear to be found copied in the margins. See Appendix

for details.

The Key to Success: Commentary on the Morning Personal Prayer (*Šarḥ li-Duʿāʾ aṣ-Ṣabāḥ*

***al-mawsūm bi-Miftāḥ an-Naǧāḥ*)**

The attribution of this commentary on a prayer attributed to ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib (fourth

caliph, reg. 35/656-40/661) is uncertain. See Appendix.

Lost and Spurious Titles

Anecdotes from Historical Reports (*Nukat al-Aḫbār*)

Mentioned by Ragib in introduction to *Littérateurs' Ripostes*.[174]

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aṯ-Ṯaqāfah wa-t-Turāṯ #38, published by Markaz Ǧamīʿat al-Māǧid li-ṯ-Ṯaqāfah wa-t-Turāṯ in Dubai in 2002. ——
——, *Letters*, 3.

[172] Theodor Menzel, "Das heutige Russland und die Orientalistik," *Der Islam*, no. 17 (1928): 94. Carl Brockelmann,
"Al-Rāghib al-Iṣfahānī," in *E.J. Brill's First Encyclopaedia of Islam, 1913-1936*, ed. M. Th. Houtsma, Thomas
Walker Arnold, René Basset, Richard Hartmann, and A. J. Wensinck (Leiden: Brill, 1987).

[173] Ragib, *Littérateurs' Ripostes*, 2:726-733.

Choice Poetry (ʿUyūn al-Ašʿār)

Mentioned by Ragib in introduction to *Littérateurs' Ripostes*.[175]

On Calling Attention to the Lessons of the Quran (*ar-Risālah al-Munabbihah ʿalā Fawāʾid al-Qurʾān*)

Mentioned twice by Ragib in the *Quranic Glossary*.[176]

On the Nobility of Sufism (*Kitāb Šaraf at-Taṣawwuf*)

Mentioned by Ragib in *Exegesis* of Quran 2:37 and 2:49.[177]

On the Relationships between Expressions (*Risālat Munāsabāt al-Alfāẓ*)

Mentioned by Ragib in introduction to the *Quranic Glossary*.[178]

On Synonyms (*Taḥqīq al-Alfāẓ al-Mutarādifah ʿalā al-Maʿnā al-Wāḥid*)

Mentioned by Ragib as a book that he plans to write after the *Quranic Glossary*.[179]

The Principles of Derivation (*Uṣūl al-Ištiqāq*)

Mentioned twice by Ragib in the *Quranic Glossary*.[180]

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[174] Ibid., 1:3.

[175] Ibid.

[176] ———, *Quranic Glossary*, 53, 229.

[177] ———. *Carullah 84*. f.42a line 15, f.51a line 14. Cf. Ibid., f.44b line 7. ———, "On the Ordering of Intellectual Disciplines and of Worldly Actions," 222.

[178] ———, *Quranic Glossary*, 55.

[179] Ibid.

[180] Ibid., 118, 189.

Durrat at-Taʾwīl wa Ġurrat at-Tanzīl fī-l-Āyāt al-Mutašābihah wa-l-Mutaʾaḫḫirah **(The Pearl of Interpretation and the Finest of Revelation in Unclear and Delayed Verses)**

This work has usually been listed among Ragib's but the recent study of Muḥammad Muṣṭafā Āydīn is persuasive in attributing it to Abū ʿAbdallāh Muḥammad al-Ḫaṭīb al-Iskāfī (d. 420/1029).[181] Āydīn has done a substantial amount of manuscript, bibliographical and content-based research. The most important witness that he draws on is Ahmed III 85 (Topkapı Palace, Istanbul, Turkey), which was copied by the famous Yāqūt al-Ḥamawī (574 or 575/1179-626/1229). Yāqūt records a previous scribal note on the witness he was working from that described using an autograph copy by al-Iskāfī.[182] The incipit of this manuscript, as well as the incipit of Fazıl Ahmed Paşa 154 (Süleymaniye, Turkey, Istanbul), record dictation of the text by al-Iskāfī to Abū al-Faraǧ Ibrāhīm b. ʿAlī b. Muḥammad al-Ardastānī.

The attribution to Ragib rests largely on the title on what appears to be a relatively early manuscript at Esad Efendi 176 (Süleymaniye, Turkey, Istanbul),[183] al-Bayhaqī's inclusion of the title in his biographical entry, and Muḥammad Ḫālid Ṣiddīqī's incorrect claim that the incipit of British Museum OR 5784 (British Library, London, United Kingdom) contains Ragib's name.[184]

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[181] Abū ʿAbdallāh Muḥammad al-Ḫaṭīb al-Iskāfī, *Durrat at-Tanzīl wa-Ġurrat at-Taʾwīl*, ed. Muḥammad Muṣṭafā Āydīn, 3 vols. (Mecca: Umm al-Qurā University, 2001). 93-208. Cf. ʿUmar ʿAbd ar-Raḥmān as-Sārīsī, "Kitāb Durrat at-Tanzīl wa Ġurrat at-Taʾwīl li-r-Rāġib al-Iṣfahānī wa Laysa li-l-Ḫāṭib al-Iskāfī," *Maǧallat Maǧmaʿ al-Luġah al-ʿArabīyah bi-Dimašq* 51, no. 1 (1976). Cf. Ragib, *Exegesis ed. aš-Šidī*, 1:100-111.

[182] al-Ḫaṭīb al-Iskāfī, *Durrat at-Tanzīl*, 1:190-191, 1:206.

[183] Ibid., 1:199-200.

[184] The incipit of British Museum OR 5784 does not contain Ragib's name, *pace* Ṣiddīqī, "Durrat at-Taʾwīl," 16-18. NB. Al-Bayhaqī also gives another unsupported title: *Kitāb Kalimāt aṣ-Ṣaḥābah* (*Words of the Prophet's Companions*), and appears only to have been personally familiar with *Analysis of the Two Creations* as discussed above. al-Bayhaqī, *Tārīḫ Ḥukamāʾ al-Islām*, 112.

Kitāb al-Maʿānī al-Akbar (The Larger Book of Literary Ideas)

Mentioned in the introduction to *Durrat at-Taʾwīl*, and therefore likely to have been written by al-Ḫaṭīb al-Iskāfī.

Iḥtiǧāǧ al-Qirāʾāt al-Muḫtaṣṣah (Vindication of Specified Readings of the Quran)

Mentioned in the introduction to *Durrat at-Taʾwīl*, and therefore likely to have been written by al-Ḫaṭīb al-Iskāfī.

Šarḥ Kalām Rasūl Allāh fī Ḥaqq ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib (Commentary on the Prophet's Words Concerning the Right of Ali)

No evidence for attribution to Ragib. See Appendix.

Times

We know almost nothing about Ragib's life, for there is no information to be found in the Arabic and Persian biographical and bibliographical traditions. This makes it more urgent that we fit him into his intellectual context, which means evaluating the ideas and beliefs expressed frankly in his works against the ideas and beliefs of others. Yet at the same time, while we can revisit the mosques and courts of Isfahan we have no way of knowing whether or when Ragib "the Isfahanian" was actually there, or exactly why he might not have been.

Isfahan

Isfahan sits in a valley in the great mountain range (then known as the Ǧibāl) that separates Iraq from Iran. Baghdad and Basra lie to the west, Shiraz to the south, Ray (now Tehran) to the north, Kerman to the south east at the end of the mountains, and to the east the great high plains of the Iranian desert (*al-mafāzah*) beyond which lie Nishapur, Herat, and Marv. Trade and

scholarship arrived in and left Isfahan from all points of the compass, although the main routes

ran mostly north, south, and west, avoiding the desert.[185] Isfahan was at the heart of what was

known as "Persian Iraq", the twin of "Arab Iraq" over the mountains to the west.[186]

In Ragib's time Isfahan was a large, relatively prosperous, and relatively chaotic city.[187]

The dynasty founded in the mid-tenth-century by the sons of Būyah b. Fannāh, a fisherman from

the south shores of the Caspian Sea, was just starting to lose control.[188] Būyah's grandson Faḫr

ad-Dawlah died in 387/997, two years after his vizier aṣ-Ṣāḥib. Būyah's great-grandsons would

not be so successful. Maǧd ad-Dawlah (Rustam b. Faḫr ad-Dawlah, reg. 387/997-4201029), who

succeeded his father aged four and scarcely ever ruled independently of his mother (Sayyidah, d.

405/1014), lost control of Isfahan around 398/1008 to the founder of a new, smaller, dynasty

originating from the same southern Caspian area, Ibn Kākūyah (ʿAlāʾ ad-Dawlah Abū Ǧaʿfar

Muḥammad b. Dušmanziyār, cousin of Sayyidah, reg. ca. 398/1008-433/1041).[189]

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[185] Durand-Guédy discusses Isfahan's "Iraqi identity" and analyses the movements of its scholars, few of whom headed east across the desert to Ḫurasān (Nishapur, Herat, Marv, etc.). Durand-Guédy, *Iranian Elites*, 32f. For trade routes see: Hugh Kennedy, *An Historical Atlas of Islam* (Leiden: Brill, 2002). 34-35. Thomas Leisten, Heinz Gaube, and Margit Sauer, "The Eastern Part of the ʿAbbāsid Empire: Sāmānids and Ghaznavids between the 9th and 11th Cent. A.D.," in *Tübinger Atlas des Vorderen Orients (TAVO)* (Tūbingen1990). Fereydoun Rahimi-Laridjani and Dieter Ohnmacht, "The Empire of the Great Salǧūks until the Death of Malikšāh (485 h/1092 A.C.)," in *Tübinger Atlas des Vorderen Orients (TAVO)* (Tūbingen1992).

[186] The two Iraqs (*al-ʿirāqayn*) made up of *ʿirāq ʿaǧamī* and *ʿirāq ʿarabī*.

[187] Durand-Guédy estimates 100,000-130,000 inhabitants around this time. (This would make it approximately the size (101,355 inhabitants) of the city of Cambridge, Massachusetts, United States in the 2000 census). Durand-Guédy, *Iranian Elites*, 25-26.

[188] In Arabic *al-buwayhiyūn*, in Persian *āl-e būya*, in English usually Buyids or Buwayhids. See: Tilman Nagel, "Buyids," in *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, ed. Ehsan Yarshater (New York: Iranicaonline Website, 1988). Cl Cahen, "Buwayhids or Būyids," in *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*, ed. P. Bearman, Th. Bianquis, C.E. Bosworth, E. van Donzel, and W.P. Heinrichs (Brill Online: Brill, 2009). Bosworth, *Islamic Dynasties*, 154-157.

[189] In Arabic *Ibn Kākūyah*, in Persian *pesar-e Kākū*, in English the dynasty is therefore the Kakuyids or Kakawayhids. See: ———, "Kākuyids," in *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, ed. Ehsan Yarshater (New York: Iranicaonline Website, 2010). ———, "Kākūyids, or Kākwayhids," in *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*, ed. P. Bearman, Th. Bianquis, C.E. Bosworth, E. van Donzel, and W.P. Heinrichs (Brill Online: Brill, 2011). ———, "ʿAlā al-Dawla Moḥammad," in *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, ed. Ehsan Yarshater (New York: Iranicaonline Website, 2010). ———,

In 409/1018, the same year that the London manuscript of Ragib's *Quranic Glossary* was written, Ibn Kākūyah's dynasty, with Isfahan as its capital, was recognised by the caliph in Baghdad and "was undeniably the major power of Western Iran".[190] Al-Māfarrūḫī describes how Ibn Kākūyah ruled Isfahan for forty and a half years in a state of constant watchfulness with spies in the camps of all his surrounding enemies. It is reported that upon learning that an enemy intended to attack Isfahan he would judge whether the enemy could be resisted, and then either fight back or retreat swiftly and tactically "to preserve the city".[191]

However, during one of these tactical absences in 420/1029, the year in which ʿAlī aš-Šīrāzī was in the city buying the London *Quranic Glossary* manuscript, Masʿūd of Ġaznah (Abū Saʿīd Šihāb ad-Dawlah b. Maḥmūd b. Sebüktigin, reg. 421/1031-432/1040) entered Isfahan and ordered a large-scale massacre to punish a local population that had been resisting in their ruler's absence.[192] Ibn al-Ǧawzī tells of an "uncountable number of scholars being killed", even in the city's mosques. Ibn al-Aṯīr puts the number of dead at around five thousand.[193] Could Ragib have been among them? In any case these were hard decades. According to Durand-Guédy, "the

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Islamic Dynasties, 160-161. For the connection to Sayyidah see ———, *ʿAlā al-Dawla*. Cf. Paul, "The Histories of Isfahan," 127 note 36.

[190] Ibn Kākūyah received the title ʿAlāʾ ad-Dawlah from the ʿAbbāsid caliph al-Qādir (Abū al-ʿAbbās Aḥmad b. Isḥāq, reg. 381/991-422/1031) in 409/1018. Durand-Guédy, *Iranian Elites*, 50. Bosworth, *Kākuyids*.

[191] *rawaġahū wa-tanaḥḥā ʿanhā ʿaǧalan wa-taġāfā ilā ṭarafin min –l-aṭrāfi muʿtazilan li-tuṣāna –l-baladah*. ("He would leave Isfahan and relinquish it in haste for an area in which he could be isolated, in order that the city be protected"). al-Māfarrūḫī, *Maḥāsin Iṣfahān*, 101. Cf. Durand-Guédy, *Iranian Elites*, 65.

[192] ———, *Iranian Elites*, 64, 62-65.

[193] Ibn al-Ǧawzī: *ǧāʾa Masʿūd ibn Maḥmūd ibn Sabuktakīn fa-nahaba –l-balada wa-qatala ʿāliman lā yuḥṣā ḥattā qutila ǧamāʿatun fī-l-ǧawāmiʿ*. Abū al-Faraǧ ʿAbd ar-Raḥmān Ibn al-Ǧawzī, *al-Muntaẓam fī-Tārīḫ al-Mulūk wa-l-Umam*, ed. F. Krenkow, 10 vols. (Haydarabad: Dāʾirat al-Maʿārif al-ʿUṯmānīyah, 1938; repr., Beirut: Dār Ṣādir, 1968). 8:70. Abū al-Ḥasan ʿAlī Ibn al-Aṯīr, *al-Kāmil fī-t-Tārīḫ*, ed. ʿUmar ʿAbd as-Salām Tadmurī, 10 vols. (Beirut: Dār al-Kitāb al-ʿArabī, 1997). 7:711. Durand-Guédy, *Iranian Elites*, 64-65.

city's life was punctured by violent occupations, assaults, sieges, pillages, massacres, epidemics and want".[194]

Ibn Kākūyah would later recover his position, and in 429/1038 he built walls of mud brick covered in plaster around the city, with crenellations and platforms, and protected by moats.[195] However, the next threat was already on the horizon and Ibn Kākūyah's son Farāmūz (Abū Manṣūr Ẓāhir ad-Dīn Šams al-Mulk b. Muḥammad, reg.433/1041-443/1051, d. after 455/1063) joined the forces of the incoming Salǧūk Ṭoġrïl Beg (Muḥammad b. Mīkāʾīl b. Salǧūk, d.455/1063), whose siege of Isfahan would be delayed by the walls Farāmūz's father had built for an entire year before the city fell in 443/1051. Another massacre and a sea change in intellectual life followed: "the creation of the Saljuqid state … in Isfahan ... had a huge impact on the local urban society … the old local elites were marginalized and deprived of the networks that enabled them to play a role…".[196]

We may never know to what extent Ragib was caught up in these events, if indeed he was still alive at this time. He may only have known Isfahan under the relative calm of Faḫr ad-Dawlah and aṣ-Ṣāḥib, if indeed he was there. Nevertheless, it does seem likely that the preservation of his biography and his scholarly networks were affected by the turmoil. Scholars that he taught, who would otherwise have passed on details of his life, may not have survived the chaos that enveloped Isfahan in the early eleventh century. The same could be true of his works. It does not seem too much of a stretch to imagine that the library founded by aṣ-Ṣāḥib's successor as vizier Abū al-ʿAbbās aḍ-Ḍabbī next to the great mosque, full of books on

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[194] ———, *Iranian Elites*, 53.

[195] Ibid., 57.

[196] ———, "Iranians at War Under Turkish Domination: The Example of Pre-Mongol Isfahan," *Iranian Studies* 38, no. 4 (2005): 596-597, 605.

everything from lexicography to logic, might have held copies of Ragib's works.[197]

Archaeologists have uncovered small fragments of this baked brick addition, but the library itself

is unlikely to have survived Masʿūd's attack and Ṭoġrïl's conquest intact.[198] Perhaps the wide

distribution of manuscripts of Ragib's *Quranic Glossary* owes something to the fact that ʿAlī aš-

Šīrāzī bought a copy and took it out of Isfahan to the library of his employer in Damascus.

Arabic and Persian Isfahan

Durand-Guédy describes a diglossic situation in which the Isfahan vernacular was Persian

while the intellectual elite, the scholars, spoke and worked in Arabic. During this period Persian

was experiencing a literary and scholarly revival on the other side of the desert, but Isfahan

turned more towards Arabic-speaking Baghdad.[199] Ragib fits this context perfectly; we have

already seen that al-Māfarrūḫī lists him among scholars who were proficient in both languages,

and there is evidence in his works, all of which are in Arabic, that he knew Persian as well. Mīr

Lawḥī has produced extensive lists of Ragib's use of Persian sources,[200] Ragib notes Persian

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[197] The library catalogue took up three volumes and comprised works in exegesis, Hadith, grammar, lexicography, morphology (*at-taṣrīf wa-l-abniyah*), poetry, narrative history (*al-aḫbār*), lives of the prophets, caliphs, kings and princes, as well as collections of Hellenistic disciplines (*min ʿulūm al-awāʾil*) such as logic, mathematics, physics, metaphysics (*ilāhīyāt*) and more. al-Māfarrūḫī, *Maḥāsin Iṣfahān*, 85.

[198] Grabar, *The Great Mosque*, 47. Durand-Guédy lists a number of lost histories of Isfahan, most pertinently for Ragib those by Muḥammad b. Isḥāq Ibn Mandah (d. 395/1005) and his son ʿAbd ar-Raḥmān (d. 470/1078). Durand-Guédy, *Iranian Elites*, 317-318.

[199] Ragib's contemporary Abū al-Qāsim Firdowsī (d. 416/1025) completed the Persian-language Iranian national epic, the *Šahnāme*, in 400/1010 in Ṭūs (now Mashhad). Djalal Khaleghi-Motlagh, "Ferdowsi, Abū'l-Qāsem: i. Life," in *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, ed. Ehsan Yarshater (New York: Iranicaonline Website, 1999). Durand-Guédy, *Iranian Elites*, 41-43. For aṣ-Ṣāḥib's use of vernacular Persian at court, see: Erez Naaman, "Literature and Literary People at the Court of Al-Ṣāḥib Ibn ʿAbbād" (Ph.D. Thesis, Harvard University, 2009), 8.

[200] Mīr Lawḥī, *Rāġeb*, 47-33, 1330139, Appendix Two. Cf. Dimitri Gutas, "Classical Arabic Wisdom Literature: Nature and Scope," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 101, no. 1 (1981): 61.

etymologies and quotes Persian phrases at several points,[201] and in *Littérateurs' Ripostes* he has a section on "poetry taken from Persian".[202]

Collegial Relationships

There is some oblique evidence in Ragib's *Letters* that at times he suffered from the vicissitudes of an intellectual culture that thrived on controversy, dispute, and factional disagreement. If anything, this shows that he was integrated into the rough and tumble scholarly culture that existed even when the broader political climate was relatively stable.[203] In *On the Difference Between the Words 'One' and 'Absolute One'* and *On the Correct Ways to Mix with People* he refers to a senior scholar (*aš-šayḫ al-fāḍil / aš-šayḫ aṭāla allāh baqāʾah*) with whom he has had productive discussions. In *On Human Virtue Arising from the Disciplines of Knowledge* he dedicates the work to a figure in authority (*al-ustāḏ*), and then in *On the Ordering of Intellectual Disciplines and of Worldly Actions* he complains that a senior scholar (*aš-šayḫ al-*

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[201] Ragib, *The Path to the Nobilities*, 251. ———, *Littérateurs' Ripostes*, 1:397. ———, *Quranic Glossary*, 318.

[202] It is not immediately clear what the sub-sub-section "lines taken from Persian" (*abyāt manqūlah min al-fārisīyah*) means here. Of the sixteen poetic *šawāhid*, most of which are single lines, several are attributed to Arabic-speaking poets. Is Ragib making a claim with this section heading? That the lines were originally Persian? That the motifs or popular sayings (*amṯāl*) behind them were originally Persian? Is he referring to New Persian, which emerged in the tenth century, or Middle Persian, the language of the pre-Islamic Sasanian empire? ———, *Littérateurs' Ripostes*, 4:852-855. Several of the lines in question appear in other collections, including al-Maydānī's collection of *amṯāl*, without reference to any Persian connection: Abū al-Faḍl Aḥmad al-Maydānī, *Maǧmaʿ al-Amṯāl*, ed. Muḥammad Muḥyī ad-Dīn ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd, 2 vols. (Maṭbaʿat as-Sunnah al-Muḥammadīyah, 1955). 1:302, 1:349, 1:446. Aḥmad b. Muḥammad aṯ-Ṯaʿlabī, *at-Tamṯīl wa-l-Muḥāḍarah*, ed. ʿAbd al-Fattāḥ al-Ḥulw (Cairo: Dār Iḥyāʾ al-Kutub al-ʿArabīyah, 1961). 104-105, 265, 376. Abū ʿUṯmān ʿAmr b. Baḥr al-Ǧāḥiẓ, *Kitāb al-Ḥayawān*, ed. ʿAbd as-Salām Muḥammad Hārūn, 7 vols. (Cairo: Muṣṭafā al-Bābī al-Ḥalabī, 1966-1969). 4:36. ʿAbdallāh Ibn al-Muʿtazz, *Ṭabaqāt aš-Šuʿarāʾ*, ed. ʿAbd as-Sattār Aḥmad Farrāǧ (Cairo: Dār al-Maʿārif, 1968). 166.

[203] When one of Badīʿ az-Zamān al-Hamaḏānī's narrators passes through Isfahan on the way to Ray, he is too afraid of the coarseness (*ḫušūnah*) of Isfahan's religious culture to leave the prayer early, and risks missing the departure of his caravan. Badīʿ az-Zamān al-Hamaḏānī, *Maqāmāt Badīʿ az-Zamān al-Hamaḏānī*, ed. Muḥammad ʿAbduh (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmīyah, 2003). 63 (al-Maqāmah al-Iṣfahānīyah). Durand-Guédy follows W. J. Prendergast's 1915 translation of *ḫušūnah* as "savage fanaticism". Durand-Guédy, *Iranian Elites*, 40. The culture of controversies could affect even the most famous scholars, see: Gabriel Said Reynolds, "The Rise and Fall of Qadi ʿAbd al-Jabbar," *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 37(2005).

fāḍil, the same one?) has slandered him to a figure in authority (*al-ustāḏ*, the same one?).[204]

Ragib had also said that were it not for the encouragement of the senior scholar (*aš-šayḫ al-fāḍil*) he would not have written *On the Difference between the Words 'One' and 'Absolute One'*, fearing that it could fall into the hands of those who would not understand and cause controversy (*fitnah*).[205]

Integrated as Ragib may have been into the turmoil of scholarly life in Isfahan, he consistently expressed distaste for it. In *The Path to the Nobilities* he discusses how common it is to see scholars who have attained a certain position in a field criticising those above them and shunning those below.[206] Competition between scholars, and the resultant mutual hatred and conflict, is an evil that it is incumbent upon the secular authorities (*as-sulṭān*) to control.[207] Furthermore, debate and dialectic itself is a bad thing. It is a reprehensible thing for intelligent scholars, and even more so for the ill-informed masses. Although debate may spur participants on to search for knowledge, the fact that they are driven by a desire to vanquish their opponent makes them unable to agree to anything, however true it may turn out to be. The right thing to do if one is faced with opponents girded for such argumentation is flee, and one should not be tempted to enlighten them with wisdom, for as the Prophet says "angels don't enter a house with a dog in it".[208] The problem with debate is that it is much easier to break down an argument than

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[204] Ragib, "One and Absolute One," 24. ———, "On the Correct Ways to Mix With People," 71. ———, "On Human Virtue Arising from the Disciplines of Knowledge," 159. ———, "On the Ordering of Intellectual Disciplines and of Worldly Actions," 213-214.

[205] ———, "One and Absolute One," 44.

[206] ———, *The Path to the Nobilities*, 173.

[207] Ibid., 182.

[208] *lā tadḫalu –l-malāʾikatu baytan fīhi kalbun [wa-lā ṣūratu tamāṯīl]*. Aḥmad b. ʿAlī al-ʿAsqalānī Ibn Ḥaǧar, *Fatḥ al-Bārī Šarḥ Ṣaḥīḥ al-Buḫārī*, ed. ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz b. ʿAbdallāh Ibn Bāz and Muḥammad Fuʾād ʿAbd al-Bāqī, 18 vols.

provide a new one, just as humans are able to slaughter animals, but not create them.[209] Again, these criticisms were popular tropes in the literature of the time; rarely, if ever, did a scholar praise the factional process of disagreements and sectarian quarrel.

Fitting into the Institutional Landscape

The Court

In Ragib's time it was very important to fit in. Careers could be made or broken based on a scholars' ability to integrate themselves into circles of power and patronage. Erez Naaman, in a recent Harvard Ph.D. dissertation, writes persuasively about the challenges and rewards of fitting into what he calls "the courtly habitus".[210] He is mostly dealing with literary taste rather than theological or sectarian positions but his analysis of the hegemonic, but not simplistic or monolithic, tastes at the heart of each circle of power is pertinent.

Naaman studied the court of aṣ-Ṣāḥib b. ʿAbbād, an arena with which we know Ragib was in contact. The member of that court with whom Ragib corresponded, Abū al-Qāsim b. Abī al-ʿAlāʾ, was described as a distinguished and leading member of the elite of Isfahan (*min wuǧūhi ahli Iṣfahān wa-aʿyānihim wa-ruʾasāʾihim*).[211] Despite his correspondence with a member of the elite, Ragib does not appear in any of the many records of the scholars at aṣ-Ṣāḥib's court.[212]

(Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmīyah, 2000). 8:383f (#3224f). Ragib, *The Path to the Nobilities*, 87, 188.

[209] ———, *The Path to the Nobilities*, 186-188.

[210] Via Pierre Bourdieu. Naaman, "Literature and Literary People." Another recent Ph.D. dissertation deals with aṣ-Ṣāḥib and his letters. Maurice Alex Pomerantz, "Licit Magic and Divine Grace: the Life and Letters of al-Ṣāḥib Ibn ʿAbbād (d. 385/995)" (Ph.D. Thesis, University of Chicago, 2010).

[211] Yāqūt, *Muʿǧam al-Udabāʾ*, 2:703. Abū al-Qāsim b. Abī al-ʿAlāʾ is not described in this way by aṣ-Ṣāḥib himself, *pace* Durand-Guédy, *Iranian Elites*, 27.

[212] For example: aṯ-Ṯaʿālibī, *Yatīmat ad-Dahr 1956 ed.* Yāqūt, *Muʿǧam al-Udabāʾ*. at-Tawḥīdī, *Aḫlāq al-Wazīrayn*.

It seems possible that Ragib's absence from the records of his time could be the result of his failure to fit into a habitus in Isfahan, whether by choice or not. It is possible to read in some of his ideas a certain coolness towards secular authority, along with an ethically founded refusal to countenance that authority behaving badly. He wrote that God censures those who seek to govern others before they have first governed and improved their souls and bodies.[213] God's is the only real command, and when one human commands another it is just figurative language.[214] Kings do not deserve to rule because of their wealth or their inheritance, they deserve to rule if they are righteous, effective, and of sound body.[215] Finally, anyone with a wife, a servant, and a house is a king! Or alternatively, anyone who does not have to work is a king![216] These do not sound like the words of a good client.

Hadith

The collection and study of Hadith presented an alternative source of cultural capital to that provided by the court. In Isfahan, its sectarian affiliations were directly opposed to the Shia and

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[213] *wa-lā yaṣlaḥu li-siyāsati ġayrihī man lā yaṣlaḥu li-siyāsati nafsihī wa-li-hāḏā ḏamma –llāhu man taraššaḥa li-siyāsati ġayrihī fa-amara bi-l-maʿrūfi wa-nahā ʿan –l-munkari wa-huwa ġayru muhaḏḏabin fī-nafsihī*. Citing Quran 2:44, 61:2-3, and 5:104. Ragib, *The Path to the Nobilities*, 84.

[214] *wa-ḏālika anna šayʾan min –l-ašyāʾi lā yakūnu illā bi-amrihī subḥānahū wa-amru –s-sulṭāni iḏā uḏifa ilā hāḏā wa-qūbila bihī wuǧida maġāzan…* ("…and that [Quran 36:82 where God commands things to "be!"] is because things only exist with God's command, and if the command of a sultan is placed next to and compared to that it is found to be figurative"). ———, *On Creeds*, 165.

[215] For example, the first four ("rightly guided") caliphs of Islam were rich in humility, not in material wealth. The subsequent text reads:
> *inna –l-mulka yustaḥaqqu fī an yakūna –l-insānu min ʿunṣurin ṣāliḥin sawāʾun kāna min bayti –l-maliki qaylun aw lam yakun wa-an yakūna ḏā ʿilmi siyāsati nafsihī wa-ahluhū min raʿīyatihī wa-an yakūna fī ǧismihī kāmila –l-ḥilqati šadīda –l-quwwati…* (The human who deserves to be king must be of good stock, whether or not he is a princeling from the king's family, he must know how to govern his own soul, his family must be among his flock, he must be, and appear to be, of sound body, and he must be strong…)

———. *Carullah 84*. f.165a-b. Cf. ———, *The Path to the Nobilities*, 129.

[216]———, *Exegesis ed. Sardār*, 310-311.

Muʿtazilī sympathies of aṣ-Ṣāḥib.[217] Hadith partisans were either Ḥanbalī or Šāfiʿī, and there are

reports of a lack of tolerance for anything close to Shiism. They vehemently defended the fifth

caliph Muʿāwiyah b. Abī Sufyān (reg. 41/661-60/680), who took the caliphate from ʿAlī, to the

extent that they considered a Hadith that classed him as a "king" rather than a "caliph"

tantamount to a profession of Shiism.[218] Aṣ-Ṣāḥib can only have been motivated by a desire to

combat anti-Muʿtazilī sentiment in Isfahan when he built an entire new mosque to promote

Muʿtazilī theology.[219]

On the other side of the theological and sectarian fence from aṣ-Ṣāḥib's Muʿtazilī Shiism,

Hadith had its own institutions and its own habitus. Isfahan had a specialised institution for

Hadith (*bayt al ʿilm wa-r-riwāyah / bayt al-ḥadīṯ wa-r-riwāyah*) that produced the city's chief

judges and was attended by its prominent families.[220] The men who dominated the Hadith scene

in Isfahan during Raġib's lifetime were engaged in bitter doctrinal quarrels, and in the process of

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[217] This should not be taken to mean that the boundaries between the two groups were necessarily fixed or rigid. Naaman discusses aṣ-Ṣāḥib's inclusion of scholars with sectarian affiliations that clashed with his own. Aṣ-Ṣāḥib's librarian, Abū Bakr Muḥammad b. al-Muqriʿ (d. 381/991) was, after all, a Ḥanbalī. Naaman, "Literature and Literary People," 74-75. On the library, see: Pomerantz, "Licit Magic and Divine Grace," 111-114. Nevertheless, Faḫr ad-Dawlah chose two Shia viziers to succeed aṣ-Ṣāḥib: Abū al-ʿAbbās aḍ-Ḍabbī and Abū ʿAlī b. Ḥamūlah al-Iṣfahānī. Durand-Guédy, *Iranian Elites*, 40. Naaman confirms that aṣ-Ṣāḥib was a Zaydī Shia, *pace* Madelung: Naaman, "Literature and Literary People," 7 note 8.

[218] Al-Muqaddasī (Šams ad-Dīn Abū ʿAbdallāh Muḥammad, d. ca. 380/990) described almost being killed by his anti-aṣ-Ṣāḥib Isfahani host for maintaining that Muʿāwiyah was a king, and complains of the foolishness and fanaticism of Isfahanis (*fī ahli iṣfahān balahun wa-ġulūw*). Muḥammad b. Aḥmad al-Muqaddasī, *Kitāb Aḥsan at-Taqāsīm fī Maʿrifat al-Aqālīm*, ed. M. J. de Goeje (Leiden: Brill, 1967; repr., Cairo: Maktabat al-Madbūlī, 1991). 399. Durand-Guédy, *Iranian Elites*, 39-40. van Ess, *Theologie und Gesellschaft*, 2:627.

[219] In the Ǧuḫǧīr quarter of Isfahan. al-Māfarrūḫī, *Maḥāsin Iṣfahān*, 85-86. Grabar, *The Great Mosque*, 47-49 (with photographs). Durand-Guédy, *Iranian Elites*, 39.

[220] The judge: *Aḥmad b. Muslim b. Muḥammad b. Ismāʿīl b. Aḥmad al-Muʿaddal waliya qaḍāʾa –l-madīnati min ahli bayti –l-ʿilmi wa-r-riwāyati katabtu ʿanhu wa-ʿāša ilā sanata ṯalāṯa wa-sittīn.* Aḥmad b. ʿAbdallāh Abū Nuʿaym al-Iṣfahānī, *Ḏikr Aḫbār Iṣbahān*, 2 vols. (Beirut: Dār al-Kitāb al-Islāmī, no date). 1:157. The member of the Ibn Mandah family (possibly the father of the Ibn Mandah discussed in the text below): *Isḥāq b. Muḥammad b. Yaḥyā b. Mandah Abū Yaʿqūb kāna min ahli bayti –l-ḥadīṯi wa-r-riwāyati tuwuffiya fī ramaḍāna sanata iḥdā wa-arbaʿīna … ra'aytuhū wa-lam arzaq minhu samāʿa ḥadīṯihī.* Ibid., 1:221. Jürgen Paul, "Isfahan: V. Local Historiography," in *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, ed. Ehsan Yarshater (New York: Iranicaonline Website, 2006).

documenting both those quarrels and their own prestige. Ibn Mandah (Muḥammad b. Isḥāq, 310/922-395/1005) was a leading Ḥanbalī and a descendant of the pre-Islamic Sasanian elite. He went on long, expensive journeys to receive transmission of Hadith and returned laden with it, followed by forty camels carrying records of the cultural capital he had amassed.[221]

Abū Nuʿaym al-Iṣfahānī (Aḥmad b. ʿAbdallāh, 336/948-430/1038) was an adherent of the legal school of aš-Šāfiʿī, and was such a controversial figure that someone who suggested going to hear Hadith from him was almost killed by Ḥanbalī partisans (referred to as *ahl al-ḥadīṯ*) with their pen-sharpening knives.[222] From an old Persian family himself (his great-great-grandfather was called Mihrān), he engaged in and recorded his quarrel with Ibn Mandah.[223] Just as with the records of events at court, Ragib is nowhere to be found in the histories of these achievements and controversies.

Ragib was conversant with Hadith terminology and committed to the theory that Hadith, the iteratively verified reports of the sayings and actions of the Prophet, were a valid and valuable source of knowledge. He was not, however, engaged in the same sort of activity as Abū Nuʿaym or Ibn Mandah who were part of the system of transmission and verification that produced works such as Abū Nuʿaym's *Ḏikr Aḫbār Iṣfahān* (*The Enumeration of Reports from Isfahan*), a long and critical "literary inventory of the transmitters of traditions".[224] Instead we

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[221] Šams ad-Dīn Muḥammad b. Aḥmad ad-Ḏahabī, *Kitāb Taḏkirat al-Ḥuffāẓ*, 5 vols. (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyah, 1990). 3:1031f.

[222] Ibid., 3:1095.

[223] Ibid., 2:278, 3:1097. Jacqueline Chabbi, "Abū Nuʿaym al-Iṣfahānī," in *Encyclopaedia of Islam, THREE*, ed. Gudrun Krämer, Denis Matringe, John Nawas, and Everett Rowson (Brill Online: Brill, 2011). Durand-Guédy, *Iranian Elites*, 29, 35-41.

[224] Chabbi, *Abū Nuʿaym*.

find in Ragib's works scattered references to the Hadith specialists (*ahl al-ḥadīṯ*), a group with whom Ragib does not identify himself and with whom he does not always agree.

For Ragib, Hadith was a staging post on the scholar's progression through the different intellectual disciplines and not the ultimate destination.[225] It was a source of revealed truth to be used alongside the Quran, but unlike the Quran it must of course be carefully checked for authenticity.[226] Those Hadith that have been related by enough parallel transmitters to remove any possibility of forgery and error (*al-mutawātirah*) have the status of necessary knowledge.[227] Less reliable Hadith with only a single chain of transmitters (*aḫbār al-āḥād*) can be rejected by reason.[228] It is only the partisans of Hadith (*ahl al-ḥadīṯ*) who maintain that religion is known only through transmission to the complete exclusion of reason,[229] a position with which Ragib disagreed. Religion, as he consistently maintained in his ethics, exegesis, and creed, is known

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[225] The different stages are listed:

> *fa-min manāzilihī [al-ʿilm] maʿrifatu –l-luġati –llatī ʿalayhā buniya –šarʿu ṯumma ḥifẓu kalāma rabbi –l-ʿizzati ṯumma samāʿu –l-ḥadīṯi ṯumma –l-fiqhu ṯumma ʿilmu –l-aḫlāqi wa-l-waraʿi ṯumma ʿilmu –l-muʿāmalāti wa-mā bayyana ḏālika min –l-wasāʾiṭi min maʿrifati uṣūli –l-barāhīni wa-l-adillah.* (The stages of knowledge are: lexicography, upon which revelation is founded; then memorization of the Quran; then listening to Hadith; then law; then ethics and piety; and then the knowledge of correct actions together with the intermediaries that enable the correct actions to be known, intermediaries consisting of the principles of proofs and indications.)

Ragib, *The Path to the Nobilities*, 172.

[226] One of the four sources of incorrect Quranic interpretation is the use of forged Hadith and its ilk (*ḫabar muzawwar aw ka-l-muzawwar / ḥadīṯ mawḍūʿ*). ———, *Methodological Introduction and Exegesis ed. Farḥāt*, 48-49. ———, "Methodological Introduction ed. Nāhī," 92-93.

[227] *al-mutawātirah* are an example of *aḫbār* that necessarily engender knowledge (*wa-lā tuqāl nabaʾun illā li-kulli ḫabarin yaqtaḍī –l-ʿilma ka-l-mutawātirah*). ———. *Carullah 84*. f.36a. The *mutawātirah* were already an established category in legal theory at this stage: *mā ṯubita min sunani -r-rasūli (ṣ) bi-t-tawāturi –l-mūǧibati li-l-ʿilm...* Aḥmad b. ʿAlī al-Ǧaṣṣāṣ, *Uṣūl al-Fiqh al-Musammā al-Fuṣūl fī al-Uṣūl*, ed. ʿUǧayl Ǧāsim an-Našamī, 4 vols. (Kuwait: Wizārat al-Awqāf wa-š-Šuʾūn al-Islāmīyah. al-Idārah al-ʿĀmmah li-l-Iftāʾ wa-l-Buḥūṯ aš-Šarʿīyah 1994). 1:169, 1:174, etc. Al-Ǧaṣṣāṣ, 305/917-370/981.

[228] *fa-inna -l-aḫbāra -l-āḥāda turaddu fī-mā taʿāfuhū -l-ʿuqūlu -ṣ-ṣaḥīḥah.* Ragib, *Exegesis ed. aš-Šidī*, 1268-1269.

[229] *maḏhabu ahli –l-ḥadīṯi anna lā wāǧiba illā min ǧihati –n-nubuwwah* (the doctrine of Hadith partisans is that no religious prescription is incumbent upon believers unless it comes from a prophet). ———, *On Creeds*, 115.

and followed through a combination of reason and revelation.[230] Ragib was happy to cite the controversial Hadith about Muʿāwiyah in *On Creeds*.[231] This is not a set of convictions that would have allowed him to fit into Isfahan's Hadith culture.

Sectarian Affiliations

Sunnis

There is no doubt that Ragib saw himself as Sunni and would have been recognised as such by his contemporaries. In *On Creeds* he writes that "the Sunnis, those who follow the example of the Prophet's Companions, are the sect in which salvation is found".[232]

The next chapter is titled "that which is incumbent upon Sunnis" and ends with the following list of "the authorities of Islam" (*aʾimmat al-islām*): Mālik b. Anas (Abū ʿAbdallāh, d. 179/796), al-Layt b. Saʿd (ʿAbd ar-Raḥmān, 94/713-175/791), al-Awzāʿī (Abū ʿAmr ʿAbd ar-Raḥmān, 88/707–157/774), Sufyān aṯ-Ṯawrī (Abū ʿAbdallāh b. Saʿīd, 97/716-161/778), Ibn ʿUyaynah (Sufyān al-Hilālī, 107/725-196/811), aš-Šāfiʿī (d. 204/820), and Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal

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[230] *maḏhabu akṯari ahli –l-aṯari anna ḏālika [dīn allāh] baʿḍuhū ʿaqlī wa-baʿḍuhū šarʿī*. The doctrine of the *ahl al-aṯar* (see below) is that some of God's religion is known by reason and some by revelation. Ibid. See also ———, *Analysis of the Two Creations*, 117-121 (chapter 18).

[231] "The caliphate will continue after me for thirty years and then it will become a kingdom" (*al-ḫilāfatu baʿdī ṯalāṯūna sanatan ṯumma taṣīru mulkan*) was cited by Ragib to argue that all Muslim rulers after 40/661 should be subject to evaluation and correction by their subjects. ———, *On Creeds*, 30. For all the protestations of the Isfahani Hadith partisans, this Hadith also appears in Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal's collection. Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, 6 vols. (Cairo: al-Maṭbaʿah al-Maymanīyah, 1895). 5:221.

[232] *wa-l-firqatu –n-nāǧiyatu hum ahlu –s-sunnati wa-l-ǧamāʿati –llaḏīna –qtadaw bi-ṣ-ṣaḥābah*. Ragib, *On Creeds*, 26. Al-ʿAğalī is following the Dublin manuscript here. ———. *Chester Beatty AR 5277*. f.4b. The sixteenth-century Istanbul manuscript has the inexplicable *wa-l-firqatu fī –n-nāḥiyah [?]*. ———. *Ms. of al-Iʿtiqādāt [On Creeds]*. Sehid Ali 382 (dated 1554), Süleymaniye, Istanbul. f.18b. In the seventeenth-century Istanbul manuscript this entire phrase has been replaced with the names of the first four caliphs in a larger hand: *anna Abā Bakr wa-ʿUmar wa-ʿUṯmān wa-ʿAlī raḍiya –llāh*. ———. *Ms. of al-Iʿtiqādāt [On Creeds]*. Feyzullah Efendi 2141 (dated 1680), Süleymaniye, Istanbul. f.38b.

(164/780-241/855).[233] All these men had been dead for over a century when Ragib was writing, and all were famous jurists and transmitters of Hadith. The men who would give their names to three of the four major legal schools are present (Mālik, aš-Šāfiʿī, and Aḥmad) and the only notable absentee is the fourth: Abū Ḥanīfah (an-Nuʿmān b. Ṭābit, d.150/767).[234] The list confirms that Ragib was Sunni, and while it suggests a certain degree of coolness towards the Ḥanafī school of jurisprudence, a minority affiliation in Isfahan at the time,[235] Ragib is happy to cite Ḥanafī positions without criticism in his *Exegesis*.[236]

Shia

Although we have established that Ragib was Sunni and not Shia, his works still contain a tremendous amount of quotations from, and venerations of, ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib.[237] That he could do this while confidently identifying himself as a Sunni tells us that the boundaries between these two major confessional groups were not in exactly the same places as in later centuries. Ragib

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[233] ———, *On Creeds*, 28-31. Al-ʿAġalī follows Sehid Ali. ———. *Sehid Ali 382*. f.19a-b. Chester Beatty and Feyzullah Efendi have *aslāf* (forefathers) for *aʾimmat al-islām* (imams of Islam). ———. *Chester Beatty AR 5277*. f.6a-b. ———. *Feyzullah Efendi 2141*. ff.38b-39a.

[234] Cf. al-Bayhaqī's (Abū Bakr Aḥmad b. al-Ḥusayn, d. 458/1066) list of the Sunni imams, which is exactly the same as Ragib's with the addition of Abū Ḥanīfah, and of two scholars who are later than anyone in Ragib's list, the authors of of the two canonical Hadith collections al-Buḫārī (Abū ʿAbdallāh Muḥammad b. Ismāʿīl, 194/810-256/870) and Muslim (Abū al-Ḥusayn b. al-Ḥaǧǧāǧ, d. 261/875). Abū al-Qāsim ʿAlī Ibn ʿAsākir, "The Exposure of the Calumniator's Lying Concerning what has been Imputed to the Imam Abu ʾl-Ḥasan al-Ashʿarī," in *The theology of al-Ashʿarī: the Arabic texts of al-Ashʿarī's Kitāb al-lumaʿ and Risālat istiḥsān al-khawḍ fī ʿilm al-kalām: with briefly annotated translations, and appendices containing material pertinent to the study of al-Ashʿarī*, ed. Richard Joseph McCarthy (Beirut: Imprimerie Catholique, 1953), 160.

[235] "…from the middle of the third/ninth century Hanafism steadily lost ground to Shafiʿism, which became the majority *madhhab* in Iṣfahān in the fourth/tenth century". Durand-Guédy, *Iranian Elites*, 36.

[236] Ragib appears to approve of a Ḥanafī rejection of the Šāfiʿī principle of negative implication. The Ḥanafī position is that negative implication is incorrect because it would mean that Quran 3:130's prohibition of "doubled and re-doubled" interest would produce an allowance of interest so long as it was not "doubled and re-doubled". Ragib, *Exegesis ed. aš-Šidī*, 852. That this is an accurate reflection of the Ḥanafī position is confirmed by: al-Ǧaṣṣāṣ, *Uṣūl al-Fiqh*, 1:291, 1:296, 1:301. For confirmation of this being a Šāfiʿī position: Vishanoff, *Islamic Hermeneutics*, 60. For another example of Ragib citing a Ḥanafī position see: Ragib, *Exegesis ed. Sardār*, 205.

[237] These have been enumerated by Mīr Lawḥī, together with Ragib's references to other Shia imams. Mīr Lawḥī, *Rāġeb*, 39, 115, Appendix One.

was pro-ʿAlī, as reflected by his relating an anecdote in which ʿAlī's failure to persuade the masses of his legitimacy is the result of their being blinded by his light.[238] He was also against the love of ʿAlī when it reached the stage of attacking the Prophet's other companions and wives.[239] He stated that the Shia were wrong about the imamate.[240]

Traditionists, Senior Sufis, and Wise Philosophers

Ragib was unquestionably Sunni, but the biographical tradition in subsequent centuries would not be satisfied with simply placing him in such a broad church and neither should we. The majority of *On Creeds*, and much of the work of other heresiographers, focussed on the differences of opinion, controversies, and sectarian battles within Sunni Islam. The problem is that it is by no means clear into which existing category Ragib should be placed, and it appears problematic to assert that someone whose work was so popular could be *sui generis* and in his own category. Nevertheless, that appears to be the case. Ragib affiliates himself with ahl *al-aṯar wa-muḥaṣṣilī aṣ-ṣūfiyah wa-l-ḥukamāʾ* ("traditionists, senior Sufis, and wise philosophers"); a

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[238] The anecdote in *The Path to the Nobilities*, in a section addressing the problems faced by the wise when preaching to the masses, reads:

> Salmah b. Kuhayl was asked what it was about Ali that led the masses to reject him while he was clearly sharper than them? Salmah replied that the masses' eyes were too dim to see Ali's light, and people always lean towards those similar to themselves. (*wa-qad qīla li-Salmah b. Kuhayl mā li-ʿAlī (r) rafaḍathu –l-ʿāmmatu wa-lahū fī kulli ḫayrin ḍirsun qāṭiʿun fa-qāla li-anna ḍawʾa ʿuyūnihim qaṣura ʿan nūrihī wa-n-nāsu ilā aškālihim amyal*).

Ragib, *The Path to the Nobilities*, 183.

[239] *yatawaṣṣalūna bi-madḥihī wa-iẓhāri maḥabbatihī ilā ḏammi -ṣ-ṣaḥābati wa-azwāǧi –n-nabīy*. ———, *On Creeds*, 14. In later centuries the Persian-language biographical tradition would latch onto Ragib's veneration of ʿAlī and class him as Shia. This appears to have started with ʿImād ad-Din aṭ-Ṭabrisī (fl. 1299) whose assertion that Ragib was an Imāmī Shia was oft-repeated. ʿImād ad-Dīn al-Ḥusayn aṭ-Ṭabrisī, *Asrār al-Imāmah* (Mashhad: Islamic Research Foundation, 2001). 514. See also: al-ʿĀmilī, *Aʿyān aš-Šīʿah*, 27:220. ʿAbbās al-Qummī, *al-Kunā wa-l-Alqāb*, 2 vols. (Qum: Muʾassasat an-Naṣr al-Islāmī, 2004). 2:262. Cf. Riedel, "Searching for the Islamic episteme," 125-126.

[240] Ragib, *On Creeds*, 26.

grouping that I have not found attested anywhere else. The remainder of this chapter is an

attempt to understand what it meant to him and what it would have meant to his contemporaries.

Traditionists (*ahl al-aṯar*)

The Ašʿarī theologian, and contemporary of Ragib, Ibn Fūrak used the name *ahl al-aṯar* for

a group of scholars that al-Ašʿarī himself debated with in Baghdad in the tenth century. Al-Ašʿarī

disagreed with them, but was prepared to defend them against those who would belittle their

knowledge, saying that their cautiousness about legitimate word usage was not necessarily

incorrect, but due to an excess rather than a lack of knowledge.[241] Al-Ašʿarī was an ex-Muʿtazilī

arguing for theological solutions that were more consistent with revelation and required less

hermeneutical recourse to figurative interpretations of Quran and Sunna than those of the

Muʿtazilah.

The *ahl al-aṯar* in al-Ašʿarī as reported by Ibn Fūrak appear to represent the Ḥanābilah,

theologians who were engaged in a political, cultural, and theological struggle with the

Muʿtazilah that often rested on Ḥanbalī commitments to literal interpretation of revelation, and

consequent Muʿtazilī claims that the Ḥanābilah were simplistic and stupid. Ragib himself was

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[241] In this passage the traditionsists (called both *ahl al-aṯar* and *aṣḥāb an-naql wa-l-aṯar*) maintain that one should refuse to describe any expression of the words of the Quran as either created or uncreated in order to avoid giving the impression that the Quran itself could be described as created. Al-Ašʿarī himself was more confident and held that one could make a distinction between the sounds created by the movement of the tongue and lips during recitation of the Quran, and the thing that was being recited, the Quran itself. Abū Bakr Muḥammad Ibn Fūrak, *Maqālāt aš-Šayḫ Abī al-Ḥasan al-Ašʿarī*, ed. Aḥmad ʿAbd ar-Raḥmān as-Sāyiḥ (Cairo: Maktabat aṯ-Ṯaqāfah ad-Dīnīyah, 2005). 61-62. Al-Ašʿarī also mentions the *ahl al-aṯar* as a group who believed that Quranic phrases that name or praise God may be abrogated by other Quranic verses that were revealed later. This is a minority position: "most people" do not allow abrogation of historical information (*aḫbār*), praise, or the names of God. al-Ašʿarī, *Maqālāt*, 610-611.

familiar with Muʿtazilī thought and whenever he identified a concept as Muʿtazilī, he disagreed with it.[242]

Ragib confirms the identification of *ahl al-aṯar* with literal interpretations in his *Exegesis*, where the *ahl al-aṯar* are the group that take literally God's "we will write down what they say" in Quran 3:181 rather than seeing it as an analogy for his memory.[243] The *ahl al-aṯar* also follow what Ragib calls the literal (*aẓ-ẓāhir*) meaning of Quran 3:195: when God forgives the sins of the early believers who fought for the cause it refers to forgiveness on the day of judgement, rather than the oblique meaning that Ragib ascribes to "some of the Sufis" that God will purify them in this world.[244]

An *aṯar* is an impression, a trace, a vestige, a remnant, and it is consequently used for the traces of God's words and the traditions and contexts that preserved the revelation.[245] The theological group most committed to the literal interpretation of revelation would therefore be keen to describe themselves as the partisans of the tradition (*ahl al-aṯar*), and it is indeed the term that the Ḥanbalī ʿAbd al-Qādir al-Ǧīlānī (470/1078–561/1166) used to describe his own

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[242] For examples of Ragib's familiarity with, and rejections of, Muʿtazilī ideas, see: (re. Quran 4:48 and 4:79) Ragib, *Exegesis ed. aš-Šidī*, 1265f, 1333f. Cf. Ǧalāl ad-Dīn as-Suyūṭī, *al-Iklīl fī Istinbāṭ at-Tanzīl*, ed. Sayf ad-Dīn ʿAbd al-Qādir al-Kātib (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmīyah, 2007). 93, 95. Aš-Šidī lists Ragib's Muʿtazilī sources: Ragib, *Exegesis ed. aš-Šidī*, 158-161. For a further example of familiarity followed by disagreement, see: ———, *On Creeds*, 216-218, 243.

[243] ———, *Exegesis ed. aš-Šidī*, 1014-1017.

[244] Ibid., 1056.

[245] "To transmit (knowledge), to relate it. Imperfect vowel u. Verbal nouns *aṯran, aṯāratan, uṯratan*. Origin: to follow something's trace." (*wa-aṯartu –l-ʿilma rawaytuhū āṯuruhū aṯran wa-aṯāratan wa-uṯratan wa-aṣluhū tatabbaʿtu aṯrahū*). ———, *Quranic Glossary*, 62. The knowledge of revelation's context is called *ʿilm al-āṯār wa-l-aḫbār* and comprises the study of the occasions of revelation (*asbāb an-nuzūl*) together with explanations of the prophetic and historical narratives (*al-aqāṣīṣ*) in the Quran. ———, *Methodological Introduction and Exegesis ed. Farḥāt*, 95. ———, "Methodological Introduction ed. Nāhī," 121. Ragib distinguishes *ahl al-aṯar* from jurists and students of eloquence as a group that studies the narratives (*qiṣaṣ*) in the Quran: *fa-l-balīġu yaḫtaṣṣu bi-maʿrifati balāġatihī [al-qurʾān] wa-faṣāḥatihī wa-l-faqīhu yaḫtaṣṣu bi-maʿrifati aḥkāmihī wa-ahlu –l-aṯari yaḫtaṣṣu bi-maʿrifati qiṣaṣih*. ("Scholars of eloquence specialise in knowledge of the Quran's expressiveness and eloquence, jurists specialise in knowledge of its legal judgements, and traditionists specialise in knowledge of its narratives"). ———, *On Creeds*, 177.

group a little more than a century after Ragib.[246] Al-Ǧīlānī was also connected to Sufism, of

which see more below.

The clearest indication that Ragib considers "traditionists, senior Sufis, and wise

philosophers" to be his preferred affiliation comes in his list of the different schools of thought

about the existence of evils in the world. This category is the seventh and final school of thought

listed, and they believe that there is wisdom in God's actions although humans are not always

able to perceive it, and that the question of evil in the world is part of the issue of predestination,

which is God's secret and not to be investigated.[247] The sixth school was the Ašāʿirah, who

believed that God does what he wills with his servants and that while there is no wisdom

requiring him to do so, everything he does is good. Ragib says that there is "no objection" to the

Ašʿarī position, which is clearly compatible with that of the traditionists, senior Sufis, and wise

philosophers, indicating that Ragib wished to make the point that while he did not necessarily

disagree with the Ašāʿirah, he did not consider himself one of them.

The same dynamic is at play in Ragib's position on the attribution of human actions to

God. Ragib supports the *ahl al-aṯar*, who hold, against the Muʿtazilah, that human actions are

created by God and that the ink made with gallnuts and vitriol is in fact created by God, who put

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[246] Al-Ǧīlānī wrote that their heretical opponents (*ahl al-bidaʿ*) would call the *ahl al-aṯar* a variety of pejorative names: *ḥašwīyah*, *muǧbirah*, *mušabbihah*, and *nāṣibah*. ʿAbd al-Qādir al-Ǧīlānī, *al-Ġunyah li-Ṭālibī Ṭarīq al-Ḥaqq fī-l-Aḫlāq wa-l-Taṣawwuf wa-l-Ādāb al-Islāmīyah*, ed. ʿAbd al-Karīm al-Aʿǧam, 2 in 1 vols. (Beirut: Dār Ṣādir, 1996). 1:102.

[247] The first five schools are: *al-Bakrīyah* who maintain that pain is falsely imagined due to a lack of faith (but cf. al-Ašʿarī, *Maqālāt*, 287-288. van Ess, *Theologie und Gesellschaft*, 2:108-118.); the dualist Magians (*al-Māǧūs*) who source evil in Satan and good in God; the dualists (*aṯ-ṯanawīyah*, Zoroastrians) who believe in an eternal light of good struggling with an eternal darkness of evil; the transmigrationists (*at-tanāsuḫīyah*) who believe in eternal souls doomed by an initial act of disobediance to God to inhabit multiple bodies until they gradually reform themselves (see ibid., 3:428f.); and the Muʿtazilah who believe that God created humans for paradise, but will prevent them from entering paradise unless they are Muʿtazilī and have not committed grave sins, actions that are rationally incumbent upon God, who would otherwise be in the reprehensible position of rewarding people who do not deserve the reward. Ragib, *On Creeds*, 250-253. See also notes 481f below.

the specific potentiality to make ink into those two substances.[248] Humans' actions must

therefore be attributed to God, even though the expressions "action", "work", and "acquisition"

(*kasb*) appear to attribute them to humans.[249] Little of the act of writing, from the conception of

ideas in the soul to the pen in the hand, is actually a human act because humans simply

administer existing things with defined potentialities "and this is what is called acquisition

(*kasb*)".[250] The position of the *ahl al-aṯar* is wholly compatible with Ašʿarī doctrine, which used

the word "acquisition" to describe the process by which humans acquire their own acts, which

God created.[251]

Ragib writes that the *ahl al-aṯar* are correct when they espouse the principle that humans

may not use any word to describe divinity other than those that have already occurred in divine

revelation.[252] For example, the word "eternal" (*qadīm*) could only be used to describe God if

God had already used it to describe himself in the Quran or Sunna. In the *Quranic Glossary*,

Ragib is clear that no such precedent exists, while in *On Creeds* he appears to accept that a

devotional Hadith rejected in the *Quranic Glossary* provides sufficient precedent to allow

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[248] Iron-gall ink (for writing) was made from gallnuts (or oak apples, *ʿafṣ*), which "are formed from swellings produced by insects laying their eggs under oak leaves", together with vitriol (a sulphate, *zāǧ*) obtained from alum (a mineral salt), and gum arabic from the acacia tree. Gacek, *Vademecum*, 132-135.

[249] Ragib, *On Creeds*, 28-29, 277-279. See also notes 481f below.

[250] Ibid., 284. In the *Quranic Glossary*, Ragib expresses the same point as follows: God acts in one of two ways. He either actually does the whole action in one go (*an abdaʿahū kāmilan dufʿatan*), or he creates both the principles for the act and the potentiality for their implementation in a certain fixed way (*mā ǧaʿala uṣūlahū mawǧūdatan bi-l-fiʿli wa-aǧzāʾahū bi-l-quwwati wa-qaddarahū ʿalā waǧhin lā yataʾattā minhu ġayru mā qaddarahū fīhi*). ———, *Quranic Glossary*, 658. He repeats this point at: ———, *On Creeds*, 265-266.

[251] al-Ašʿarī, *The Theology*, 39f, 43-44. Mīr Lawḥī, *Rāġeb*, 35, 109-111.

[252] *ḏakara ahlu –l-aṯari anna –llāha ʿazza wa-ǧalla lā yaṣiḥḥu an yūṣafa illā bi-mā warada –s-samʿu bihī ... wa-hāḏā huwa aṣ-ṣaḥīḥ*. Ragib, *On Creeds*, 79. *lā naṣifu –llāha taʿālā wa-lā naṣifu –l-umūra –l-ilāhīyata illā bi-mā wurida bihī –s-samʿ*. Ibid., 173.

"eternal" but not "eternality" (*qidam*).[253] This second position may be equivalent to one taken by a group of the followers of Ibn Kullāb (ʿAbdallāh b. Saʿīd al-Qaṭṭān, d. ca. 241/855), an early opponent of the Muʿtazilah with argumentation along broadly Ašʿarī lines, although we do not know the reasoning behind his follower's position in this case.[254]

As for the Ašāʿirah in Ragib's time, al-Bāqillānī (Abū Bakr Muḥammad b. aṭ-Ṭāyyib, d. 403/1013) is comfortable using the word "eternal" to describe God while maintaining the same principle as Ragib, that descriptions of God must have divine precedent. He does not mention the question of precedent for "eternal".[255] Ibn Fūrak both uses "eternal" and rejects the principle.[256]

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[253] We have no way of knowing whether Ragib wrote the *Quranic Glossary* before or after *On Creeds* (both mention *The Path to the Nobilities*). In the *Quranic Glossary* he says while the devotional phrase *yā qadīmu –l-iḥsān* ("o eternally beneficent") is a precedent, it is not "in the Quran or in correct Hadith" (*min –l-qurʾāni wa-l-āṯāri -ṣ-ṣaḥīḥah*). ———, *Quranic Glossary*, 661. In *On Creeds*, he writes that "some of the *ahl al-aṯar*" are incorrect to describe God's capability (*qudrah*) and knowledge as eternal (*bi-l-qidam*) because "we" hold the principle that any description of God must have a precedent in revelation, and *yā qadīmu –l-iḥsān* is such a precedent. ———, *On Creeds*, 89. The phrase *yā qadīmu –l-iḥsān* appears in a prayer that was learnt from the Prophet Muḥammad in a dream. Muḥibb ad-Dīn aṭ-Ṭabarī (Aḥmad b. ʿAlī al-Makkī, 615/1218-694/1294) states that Abū ʿUṯmān Ismāʿīl aṣ-Ṣābūnī (a widely travelled transmitter of Hadith, 373/983-449/1057) related that Muḥammad b. Wazīr (al-Wāsiṭī, d. 257/871) had seen the Prophet in a dream, asked him for beneficial prayers, and been provided with a prayer that included the phrase *yā qadīmu –l-iḥsān*. Muḥibb ad-Dīn aṭ-Ṭabarī, *ar-Riyāḍ an-Naḍirah fī Manāqib al-ʿAšarah*, ed. Muḥammad Badr ad-Dīn an-Naʿsānī al-Ḥalabī, 2 vols. (Cairo: al-Ḫānǧī, 1951). 1:30. For al-Wāsiṭī: Šams ad-Dīn Muḥammad b. Aḥmad ad-Ḏahabī, *Kitāb Taḏkirat al-Ḥuffāẓ*, 5 vols. (Hyderabad: Osmania Oriental Publications Bureau, 1958). 2:502. ———, *Siyar*, 12:185. For aṣ-Ṣābūnī: Kaḥḥālah, *Muʿǧam al-Muʾallifīn*, 1:368.

[254] "Some of them claim that God is eternal without 'an eternality', and others claim that God is eternal with 'an eternality'" (*fa-minhum man zaʿama anna –llāha qadīmun lā bi-qidam wa minhum man zaʿama annahū qadīmun bi-qidamin*). al-Ašʿarī, *Maqālāt*, 170, 547. Cf. note 428.

[255] Al-Bāqillānī is discussing whether God can be described as "desiring" (*bi-š-šahwah*):
    That is correct as an idea, but he has made a mistake and gone against the community by describing the eternal as desiring for there is no evidence for that in the Quran or Sunna, and because God's names are not fixed by analogy. (*ḏālika ṣaḥīḥun min ṭarīqi –l-maʿnā ġayra annahū aḫṭaʾa wa-ḫālafa –l-ummata fī waṣfi –l-qadīmi bi-š-šahwati iḏ lam yarid bi-ḏālika kitābun wa-lā sunnatun li-anna asmāʾuhū taʿālā lā tuṯbatu qiyāsan*).

Abū Bakr Muḥammad b. aṭ-Ṭayyib al-Bāqillānī, *al-Inṣāf fī-Mā Yaǧib Iʿtiqāduhū wa-Lā Yaǧūz al-Ǧahl bi-hī*, ed. Muḥammad Zāhid al-Kawṯarī (Cairo: Muʾassasat al-Ḫānǧī, 1963). 39. Al-Bāqillānī also repeats the principle and attributes it to al-Ašʿarī: *qawlu –š-šayḫi mawṣūfun bimā waṣafa bihi nafsahū fī kitābihī wa-ʿalā lisāni nabīyihī*. Ibid., 34.

[256] Calling God "eternal" is the consensus of the imams (*iǧmāʿ al-aʾimmah*) "even though the expression is found in neither the Quran nor the Sunna" (*wa-in lam yarid bi-lafẓihī naṣṣu kitābin wa-lā sunnah*). Abū Bakr Muḥammad Ibn Fūrak, *Muǧarrad Maqālāt al-Ašʿarī*, ed. Daniel Gimaret (Beirut: Dār al-Mašriq, 1987). 42.

The Muʿtazilah's overriding principle was to rely on reason and analogy to decide questions such as how to describe God, so it is hardly a surprise to find that they are comfortable describing God as "eternal", and the same holds true for those working in the Hellenistic philosophical tradition (the *falāsifah*).[257]

If not the Ašāʿirah or the Muʿtazilah, who is it that agrees with Ragib's principle, and who might therefore be connected to the *ahl al-aṯar*? A prominent member of the Shia of Baghdad, aš-Šayḫ al-Mufīd (Abū ʿAbdallāh Muḥammad, d. 413/1022) took the same position as al-Bāqillānī, assuming that God could be called "eternal" but stating the position that he could only be described following divine precedent. Like the Ašāʿirah and the Ḥanābilah, aš-Šayḫ al-Mufīd was developing a theology opposed to the Muʿtazilī over-reliance on reason, but it is hard to imagine Ragib's *ahl al-aṯar* being Shia.[258] A slightly more likely group are the Māturīdīyah, followers of Abū Manṣūr Muḥammad al-Māturīdī (d. 383/993) in Samarkand and Transoxania. They too maintained the principle that God could only be described in his own words, but they were Ḥanafī and I have already noted Ragib's pointed exclusion of Abū Ḥanīfah from his list of

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[257] al-Ašʿarī, *Maqālāt*, 180. Johannes Reinier Theodorus Maria Peters, *God's created speech: a study in the speculative theology of the Muʿtazilī Qāḍī l-Quḍāt Abū l-Ḥasan ʿAbd al-Jabbār bn Aḥmad al-Hamaḏānī* (Leiden: Brill, 1976). 246-247. For the *falāsifah*, see: Wisnovsky, "One Aspect of the Avicennian Turn," 68f.

[258] As a Shia, aš-Šayḫ al-Mufīd of course considered divine precedent to include the sources of proof that came after Muḥammad, i.e. the imams:

> The creator can only be named with that which he named himself in the Quran, or that which his Prophet called him, or that with which he is named by one of the imams. (*lā yağūzu tasmiyatu –l-bārī taʿālā illā bi-mā sammā bihī nafsahū fī kitābihī aw ʿalā lisāni nabīyihī (ṣ) aw sammā bihī huğğatun min ḫulafāʾi nabīyihī*).

Aš-Šayḫ al-Mufīd then goes on to say that if one removes the imams from this list, and replaces them with consensus (*iğmāʿ*), then the position becomes acceptable to all Imāmī Shia, all the Muʿtazilah in Baghdad, all the Murğiʿah, and the partisans of Hadith (*aṣḥāb al-ḥadīṯ*, for whom read the Ḥanābilah). Reliance on consensus is also an Ašʿarī position (see note 256). aš-Šayḫ al-Mufīd, *Awāʾil al-Maqālāt*, ed. Mehdi Mohaghegh and M. J. McDermott (Tehran: Institute of Islamic Studies: University of Tehran / McGill University, 2004). 4, 13.

the imams of Islam.[259] Furthermore, Madelung remarks that before the Salǧūk period they were "virtually unknown" west of the Iranian desert.[260]

The group most likely to have influenced Ragib were the Ḥanābilah. As we have discussed above, they were a dominant force in pre-Salǧūk Isfahan and they were also a loud voice in Baghdad, which was much closer to Isfahan than Samarkand and Transoxania. Al-Barbahārī (Abū Muḥammad al-Ḥasan b. ʿAlī, d. 329/941), whose defence of Ḥanbalī positions had been so strident as to spark rioting on a number of occasions in Baghdad, put forth the principle that God could only be described in his own words in his creedal statement.[261]

The Ḥanābilah were also the group that tended to share Ragib's professed distaste for theological niceties. When Ragib addresses the question of whether God should be described as

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[259] Although Abū Ḥanīfah does imply in his discussion of God's will (mašīʾah) that God should only be described in the way that he has already described himself, i.e. according to precedent:

> If someone says no [to the question of whether God could have chosen to make his entire creation as obedient as his angels] then they have described God with something other than that with which he described himself (fa-in qāla lā fa-qad waṣafa –llāha taʿālā bi-ġayri mā waṣafa bihī nafsuhū).

Abū Ḥanīfah, "al-Fiqh al-Absaṭ," 55. For a discussion, with references, of the probability that this work is an accurate transmission of Abū Ḥanīfah's teaching, see: Hiroyuki Yanagihashi, "Abū Ḥanīfa," in *Encyclopaedia of Islam, THREE*, ed. Gudrun Krämer, Denis Matringe, John Nawas, and Everett Rowson (Brill Online: Brill, 2011).

[260] *fa-huwa musammā bi-mā sammā bihī nafsahū mawṣūfun bi-mā waṣafa bihī nafsaḥ.* Abū Manṣūr Muḥammad al-Māturīdī, *Kitāb at-Tawḥīd*, ed. Fathalla Kholeif (Beirut: Dār al-Mašriq, 1970). 44. Ulrich Rudolph, *al-Māturīdī und die sunnitische Theologie in Samarkand* (Leiden: Brill, 1997). 76. Wilferd Madelung, "Māturīdiyya," in *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*, ed. P. Bearman, Th. Bianquis, C.E. Bosworth, E. van Donzel, and W.P. Heinrichs (Brill Online: Brill, 2010).

[261] His creed read:

> Only talk about God with what he described himself with in the Quran, and what the messenger of God explained to his companions. (wa-lā yatakallam fī-r-rabbi ṣubḥānahū wa-taʿālā illā bi-mā waṣafa bihī nafsuhū ʿazza wa-ǧalla fī-l-qurʾāni wa-mā bayyana rasūlu –llāhi (ṣ) li-aṣḥābih).

Muḥammad Ibn Abī Yaʿlā and Šams ad-Dīn Muḥammad al-Qādir, *Iḫtiṣār Ṭabaqāt al-Ḥanābilah*, ed. Aḥmad ʿUbayd (Damascus: al-Maktabah al-ʿArabīyah, 1931). 301. For further details on al-Barbahārī's creed, from which this statement is taken, and the rioting in Baghdad, see: Christopher Melchert, "al-Barbahārī," in *Encyclopaedia of Islam, THREE*, ed. Gudrun Krämer, Denis Matringe, John Nawas, and Everett Rowson (Brill Online: Brill, 2011).

"willing" (*murīd*) he accepts that it is a legitimate description because of the Quranic precedent,[262] but then expresses frustration with subsequent theological parsing:

> And the discussions about whether God wills for himself, or whether he wills with an eternal will, or with a created will, and if with a created will is the will in a specific place or not in a specific place – God has protected us from needing to deal with these matters.[263]

These are exactly the questions debated by the Ašāʿirah and Muʿtazilah,[264] and avoided by the Ḥanābilah. As discussed above, Ragib had distaste for the dialectic processes of theological debate, a distaste shared by Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal who said that following the Sunna meant abandoning debates, dispute, and quarrels about religion.[265] Theologians (*al-mutakallimūn*) often appear in *On Creeds* as a group that is in error.[266] In an important passage that I will return to below, Ragib writes that it is because the Muʿtazilah fail to either submit to revelation (*istislām li-l-aṯar*) or be sufficiently inspired to understand it that they misunderstand the status of the Quran.[267]

The problem with identifying Ragib's *ahl al-aṯar* with the Ḥanābilah is that Ragib himself makes a clear distinction between *ahl al-aṯar* and Hadith partisans (*ahl al-ḥadīṯ*) in which Hadith

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[262] Ragib, *Quranic Glossary*, 371.

[263] *wa-l-kalāmu fī anna –llāha taʿālā huwa murīdun li-nafsihī aw bi-irādatin qadīmatin aw muḥdaṯatin wa-annahū wa-in kāna murīdan bi-irādatin muḥdaṯatin fa-hal hiya fī maḥallin aw lā fī maḥallin mimmā* [al-ʿAġalī has *fa-mā* after Sehid Ali 382 ≠ the other three mss.] *kafānā allāhu amrahā.* ———, *On Creeds*, 270.

[264] Faḫr ad-Dīn ar-Rāzī (543/1149-606/1209) writes that the community agrees God is willing but disagrees on the exegesis. Muḥammad b. ʿUmar Faḫr ad-Dīn ar-Rāzī, *Tafsīr al-Faḫr ar-Rāzī al-Mušahhar bi-t-Tafsīr al-Kabīr wa Mafātīḥ al-Ġayb* (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 1981). 11:180 (Quran 5:6). For the disagreements: al-Ašʿarī, *The Theology*, 23. Ibn Fūrak, *Maqālāt ed. as-Sāyiḥ*, 70. Muḥammmad b. ʿAbd al-Karīm aš-Šahrastānī, *Kitāb al-Milal wa-n-Niḥal*, ed. Amīr ʿAlī Mahnā and ʿAlī Ḥasan Fāʿir, 2 vols. (Beirut: Dār al-Maʿrifah, 1993). 1:100.

[265] Muḥammad Ibn Abī Yaʿlā, *Ṭabaqāt al-Ḥanābilah*, ed. Muḥammd Ḥāmid al-Faqī (Cairo: Maṭbaʿat as-Sunnah al-Muḥammadīyah, 1952). 1:130, 1:241. Nimrod Hurvitz, *The Formation of Ḥanbalism: piety into power* (London: Routledge / Curzon, 2002). 138.

[266] Ragib, *On Creeds*, 157-158, 160, 300.

[267] Ibid., 167-168.

partisans rely solely on prophecy to determine religion, whereas "most of the *ahl al-aṯar*" rely on

both reason and revelation.[268] Ibn Fūrak made a comparable distinction between two types of

Hadith partisans (*aṣḥāb al-ḥadīṯ*): those who focussed on the simple transmission of tradition and

its correctness, and those who were more concerned with the principles, analogies, structures

(*tartīb al-furūʿ ʿalā –l-uṣūl*), and proofs in the traditions themselves.[269] Both Ibn Fūrak and

Ragib seem to identify a grouping that shares the beliefs of the Hadith partisans while also

delving into more complex theories than were required by the simple process of collection,

verification, and transmission of Hadith. These classifications are not just a problem for us; they

must also have been a problem for Ragib in Isfahan in the tenth/eleventh centuries. His

opposition to, and criticism of, the Muʿtazilah prevented him from joining their circles and his

commitment to reason at the expense of sole reliance on prophecy would have been a problem

for the Ḥanābilah. His distaste for the use of theological neologisms to describe God may have

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[268] Ragib also identifies a non-Muslim group as relying solely on reason to the exclusion of prophecy. Patricia Crone has discussed how this group (*al-Barāhimah*) were often used in *kalām* as placeholders for such an idea. Patricia Crone, "Barāhima," in *Encyclopaedia of Islam, THREE*, ed. Gudrun Krämer, Denis Matringe, John Nawas, and Everett Rowson (Brill Online: Brill, 2011). Ragib:

> On God's Religion: is it based purely on reason, or purely on prophecy, or on a mixture of the two? There are three schools of thought: (1) the Brahmins who reject prophecy and say that one only knows what to do through reason; (2) the Hadith partisans who say that one only knows what to do through prophecy; (3) the majority of the *ahl al-aṯar* who say that some of religion is known through reason, and some through religion. (*al-kalāmu fī dīni –llāhi taʿālā hal huwa ʿaqlīyun maḥḍun aw nabawīyun maḥḍun am baʿḍuhū ʿaqlī wa-baʿḍuhū nabawī li-n-nāsi fī hāḏā ṯalāṯatu maḏāhiba –l-awwalu maḏhabu –l-barāhimah fa-innahum ankarū –n-nubuwwata wa-qālū lā wāğiba illā min ğihati –l-ʿaqli wa-ṯ-ṯānī maḏhabu ahli –l-ḥadīṯi anna lā wāğiba illā min ğihati –n-nubuwwati wa-ṯ-ṯāliṯu maḏhabu akṯari ahli –l-aṯari anna ḏālika baʿḍuhū ʿaqlīyun wa-baʿḍuhū šarʿī*).

Ragib, *On Creeds*, 114-115.

[269] Ibn Fūrak likened the first group to the treasury of a king, and the second group to the patricians who defend that treasury against its opponents. Abū Bakr Muḥammad Ibn Fūrak, *Kitāb Muškil al-Ḥadīṯ aw Taʾwīl al-Aḫbār al-Mutašābihah*, ed. Daniel Gimaret (Damascus: Institut Francais de Damas, 2003). 2. This passage is commented upon by Frank, who translates *tartīb al-furūʿ ʿalā –l-uṣūl* as "how the secondary dogmas … are derived from those that are primary". Frank, "Elements`," 148-149, cf. 180-181.

been the reason for his decision not to identify himself with the usual Ašʿarī middle position between the Ḥanābilah and Muʿtazilah.

This absolute commitment to the combination of reason with revelation, expressed by Ragib in his ethics as well as his theology,[270] is what would lead him to agree with the Muʿtazilah on several key issues, although he would never name them or admit that their position was valid, as he was prepared to do with the Ašāʿirah. These positions of Ragib's were then most probably the cause of the reputation for Muʿtazilī beliefs that would follow him after his death. At the end of the fifteenth century as-Suyūṭī would write that "lots of people think that he is Muʿtazilī".[271] Even as-Suyūṭī himself had thought this until he came across a note that alerted him to Faḫr ad-Dīn ar-Rāzī's (543/1149-606/1209) statement that Ragib was "a Sunni imam".[272]

The "lots of people" that as-Suyūṭī refers to would indeed have had cause to think Ragib was a Muʿtazilī if, like as-Suyūṭī himself, they did not have access to Ragib's *On Creeds* or his complete *Exegesis*. In the methodological introduction to the *Exegesis*, Ragib states that the Quran is inimitable in part because God actively prevented the Arabs at the time, who were highly skilled users of language, from even trying to imitate it.[273] This is the doctrine of *ṣarfah*

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[270] Ragib, *Analysis of the Two Creations*, 117-121 (chapter 18).

[271] as-Suyūṭī, *Buġyat al-Wuʿāh*, 2:297.

[272] Ibid. As-Suyūṭī says that the note was in the handwriting of az-Zarkašī, and that it cited this judgement as being in Faḫr ad-Dīn's *Taʾsīs at-Taqdīs*. The extant statement in Faḫr ad-Dīn's *Asās at-Taqdīs* is not quite the same: Ragib is mentioned along with al-Ġazālī as believing in immaterial souls and substances, and as belonging to the same group as the Sunni Faḫr ad-Dīn (*wa-miṯla Abī –l-Qāsim ar-Rāġib wa Abī Ḥamīd al-Ġazālī min aṣḥābinā*). Faḫr ad-Dīn ar-Rāzī, *Asās at-Taqdīs*, ed. Aḥmad Ḥiǧāzī as-Saqā (Cairo: Maktabat al-Kulīyāt al-Azharīyah, 1986). 16-17. Cf. Riedel, "Searching for the Islamic episteme," 112,122-123.

[273] Ragib, *Methodological Introduction and Exegesis ed. Farḥāt*, 108-109. ———, "Methodological Introduction ed. Nāhī," 130-131. For further discussion of Ragib's position on Quranic inimitability, see: Alexander Key, "Language and Literature in al-Rāġib al-Iṣfahānī," in *Reflections on Language and Knowledge in Middle Eastern Societies* (Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2010), 40-48.

(the turning aside), and it is widely recognised as a Muʿtazilī doctrine, first heard of from an-Naẓẓām (Abū Isḥāq Ibrāhīm, d. ca. 840), maintained by Ragib's Muʿtazilī contemporaries in Baghdad such as aš-Šarīf al-Murtaḍā (Abū al-Qāsim ʿAlī, 355/967-436/1044), and rejected by the Ašāʿirah.[274] Ragib must have been well aware of aš-Šarīf al-Murtaḍā, a powerful Baghdadi Shia, and did indeed quote his brother aš-Šarīf ar-Raḍī (Abū al-Ḥasan Muḥammad, 359/970-406/1016) on numerous occasions in his *adab* compendia.[275]

Ragib was also prepared, at times, to interpret the Quran figuratively. He writes in the methodological introduction to the *Exegesis* that the words "God's hands are outspread" in Quran 5:64 mean that his blessing is continuous, and not that God actually has hands.[276] He repeats this reading in the *Quranic Glossary* and the *Exegesis* itself.[277] It was a central tenet of Ašʿarī, and of course Ḥanbalī, creed to reject this figurative reading, and a well-known Muʿtazilī

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[274] We can also connect Ragib to the brother of this powerful Baghdadi Shia Muʿtazilī aš-Šarīf al-Murtaḍāwhom Ragib quotes: ———, "Language and Literature," 43-44. Saʿīd b. Muḥammad Abū Rašīd an-Nišābūrī. *Ms. Fragment of Ziyādāt aš-Šarḥ*. Or. 8613 (dated est. 11th C.), in Oriental Manuscripts, British Library, London. ff.17-27. Abū Bakr Muḥammad b. aṭ-Ṭayyib al-Bāqillānī, *Iʿǧāz al-Qurʾān*, ed. Aḥmad Ṣaqr (Cairo: Dār al-Maʿārif, 1954). 30. Richard C. Martin, "Inimitability," in *Encyclopaedia of the Qurʾān*, ed. Jane Dammen McAuliffe (Brill Online: Brill, 2009).

[275] Ragib, *Littérateurs' Ripostes*, 4:358 (index). ———, *Confluence of Eloquence*, 2:852 (index).

[276] Ragib attributes this position to *al-ḥukamāʾ* and *ahl al-ḥaqāʾiq*. ———, *Methodological Introduction and Exegesis ed. Farḥāt*, 40-41. ———, "Methodological Introduction ed. Nāhī," 87-88. See full quotation at note 580.

[277] ———, *Quranic Glossary*, 889-890. ———, *Exegesis ed. aš-Šidī*, 926. ———, *Exegesis ed. Sardār*, 393.

position to accept it.[278] Al-Qāḍī ʿAbd al-Ǧabbār described it as a choice of reason (ʿaql) above literal meaning (ẓāhir).[279]

We do not know whether Ragib's incompatibility with the major theological and socio-political groups of his time was the result of his own choices, perhaps his refusal to make the intellectual compromises needed to fit into a particular school, or whether it is the result of our own incomplete knowledge of his context, and he in fact fitted perfectly into a habitus of which we are now ignorant. In any case, it appears that the *ahl al-aṯar* as he understood them are, as far as we know, close to the Ḥanābilah but also distinct from them on crucial points. Perhaps this is why Ragib chose to put the *ahl al-aṯar* together with two better-known and potentially more easily definable groups: senior Sufis and wise philosophers (*muḥaṣṣilī aṣ-ṣūfiyah wa-l-ḥukamāʾ*).

Senior Sufis (muḥaṣṣilī aṣ-ṣūfiyah)

Ragib's combination of Sufism and traditionism was a common one in the Isfahan of his day. There were long-established Sufi institutions in the city, and an acceptance of Sufism on both sides of the juristic-political conflict between the Ḥanābilah and Šāfiʿīyah.[280] A contemporary of Ragib's, and close associate of the powerful Isfahani Ḥanbalī Ibn Mandah, made an explicit attempt to argue that Ḥanbalī ideas were the only natural partner for Sufi ethics and lifestyle. Abū Manṣūr al-Iṣfahānī (Maʿmar b. Aḥmad, d. 418/1027) wrote that his adherence

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[278] al-Ašʿarī, *The Theology*, 237. ———, *Maqālāt*, 218. Al-Bāqillānī adjusts al-Ašʿarī's position to include the statement that while God does have hands, they are not limbs (ǧāriḥatayn) and do not have form (ṣūrah) or structure (hayʾah). al-Bāqillānī, *al-Inṣāf*, 23. Cf. Frank, "Elements`," 163f, 175, note 87. Ibn Fūrak, however, admits that at least one instance of God's "hands" (aydin) in the Quran (51:47, aḏ-Ḏārīyāt) means both "ability" and "potentiality" (al-qudrah wa-l-quwwah), and later Ašʿarī scholars such as Imām al-Ḥaramayn al-Ǧuwaynī (Abū al-Maʿālī ʿAbd al-Malik b. ʿAbdallāh, 1028-1085) would agree. Ibn Fūrak, *Maqālāt ed. as-Sāyiḥ*, 45; W. Montgomery Watt, *Islamic Philosophy and Theology: an extended survey* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1985). 83.

[279] Ibn Aḥmad al-Asadābādī al-Qāḍī ʿAbd al-Ǧabbār, *Mutašābih al-Qurʾān*, ed. ʿAdnān Muḥammad Zarzūr (Cairo: Dār at-Turāṯ, 1969). 230f.

[280] On the Šāfiʿī side Abū Nuʿaym (see above) combined Hadith and Sufism. Isfahan also had long-standing Sufi institutions (ḫānqāh). Durand-Guédy, *Iranian Elites*, 37.

was to the Sunna and to Sufism, and that he belonged to *ahl as-sunnah wa-l-aṯar*. The *aṯar* here

can only be a reference to Abū Manṣūr's Ḥanbalī creed.[281] The only explicit profession of

Sufism that Ragib made was his reference to a work called *On the Nobility of Sufism* in which he

said he had discussed the different stages (*maqāmāt*) attained by scholars, the wise, and senior

figures.[282]

Abū Manṣūr wrote that there are two ways for humans to approach God: through worship,

and through mysticism. This is perhaps the central claim of Sufism, that there is a mystic and

inspired route to the truth that has the potential to bypass the normal human approaches to

knowing and learning. Abū Manṣūr did not believe that any of his contemporaries were good

enough to travel on the second mystic path.[283] Ragib seems to have been more optimistic. There

is a repeated conviction throughout Ragib's ethical works that human beings have the potential

to become as good as the angels, and indeed that this is their purpose.[284] The attainment of such

status, or of something close to it, puts humans in a position where they can receive divinely

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[281] Muʿammar Abū Manṣūr al-Iṣfahānī and Nasrollah Pourjavady, "Du Azar-e Kūtāh Az Abū Manṣūr Eṣfahānī," *Maʿārif* 3, no. 6 (1970): 41. ———, "Kitāb al-Manāhiǧ bi-Šāhid as-Sunnah wa-Nahǧ al-Mutaṣawwifah," *Maʿārif* 3, no. 7 (1971): 20. For details of Abū Manṣūr, who married Ibn Mandah's widow, see: Nasrollah Pourjavady, "Abū Manṣūr al-Iṣfahānī," in *Encyclopaedia of Islam, THREE*, ed. Gudrun Krämer, Denis Matringe, John Nawas, and Everett Rowson (Brill Online: Brill, 2009). Also Durand-Guédy, *Iranian Elites*, 37-38.

[282] *li-kulli firqatin maqāmātun maʿdūdatun yatarattabu baʿḍuhā ʿalā baʿḍin wa-hāḏihī masʾalatun kaṯīratun* [sic] *aḥkamtuhā fī kitābi šarafi –t-taṣawwufi wa-bayyantu taḥṣīṣa kulli maqām*. Ragib. *Carullah 84*. f.42a. Elsewhere, Ragib in fact tended to describe Sufi positions as "Sufi" as if they were a group with which he agreed but to which he did not necessarily belong. For example (inter alia): ———, *Exegesis ed. aš-Šidī*, 755, 1213. ———, *On Creeds*, 38, 77, 85, 95, 185, 255. Aš-Šidī notes that one position described by Ragib as Sufi was indeed held by al-Qušayrī (Abū al-Qāsim ʿAbd Karīm, 376/986-465/ 1072), and also that Ragib's divisions of believers into levels was described by Abū Ḥayyān al-Andalusī as "resembling Sufi ideas" (*šabīhun bi-kalāmi –l-mutaṣawwifah*). ———, *Exegesis ed. aš-Šidī*, 614 (note 2), 1313 (note 1). Abū Ḥayyān al-Andalusī, *al-Baḥr al-Muḥīṭ*, 3:300.

[283] Abū Manṣūr al-Iṣfahānī and Pourjavady, "Du Azar-e Kūtāh," 41.

[284] A Hadith used by Ragib in this context, "my community are almost prophets themselves", is found in Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal's collection. Ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad 1895*, 1:296. The Path to the Nobilities is an account of the ways in which a human being can fulfill his divine potential and come to deserve to be described as God's vicegerent (*ḫalīfah*) on the earth. The *Analysis* is an exhortation that we become as good as, or even better than, the angels. Ragib, *The Path to the Nobilities*, 59f. ———, *Analysis of the Two Creations*, 185-186 (chapter 33).

provided knowledge (*al-ʿulūm al-mawhabīyah*) directly.[285] Abū Manṣūr, who shared Ragib's

profession of distaste for theology, would no doubt also have agreed with this theory.[286] In *On*

the Ordering of Intellectual Disciplines Ragib called those who had attained the top level of

divinely provided knowledge "the senior figures" (*al-kubarāʾ*), and distinguished them from the

scholars (*al-ʿulamāʾ*) and the wise (*al-ḥukamāʾ*). His "senior figures" are the same group that he

mentioned in his *Exegesis* as being dealt with in more detail in his lost work *On the Nobility of*

Sufism.[287]

    Where Ragib perhaps strays from mainstream Sufism is in his confidence that those who

attain the highest levels of knowledge and access divine inspiration are scholars schooled in

reasoning rather than mystic hair shirt-clad itinerants. In a section of *The Path to the Nobilities*

on the necessity of earning a living, Ragib attacks those who refuse to work while claiming to be

Sufi for their clogging up the streets and pushing up prices.[288] Elsewhere in *The Path* he makes a

threefold split between angelic humans, demonic humans, and merely human humans in which

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[285] ——, *On Creeds*, 92-95. ——, *Methodological Introduction and Exegesis ed. Farḥāt*, 95-96. ——, "Methodological Introduction ed. Nāhī," 122. ——, "On the Ordering of Intellectual Disciplines and of Worldly Actions," 220-223. Wisdom can only be attained through correction by a teacher (*muhaḏḏab*) or through divine inspiration (*ilāhī*). ——, *The Path to the Nobilities*, 142. Cf. ——, "On Human Virtue Arising from the Disciplines of Knowledge," 176-178. The idea of divinely-provided knowledge had been discussed by Ibn Wahb al-Kātib (Abū al-Ḥusayn Isḥāq, fl. ca. 950) under the title "the divinely-provided reason" (*al-ʿaql al-mawhūb*). [ascrib. to Qudāmah b. Ǧaʿfar] Ibn Wahb al-Kātib, *al-Burhān fī Wuǧūh al-Bayān [Kitāb Naqd an-Naṯr]*, ed. ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd al-ʿAbbādī and Taha Ḥusayn (Cairo: Wizārat al-Maʿārif al-ʿUmūmīyah, 1933). 7. Cf. note 501.

[286] Abū Manṣūr al-Iṣfahānī and Pourjavady, "Kitāb al-Manāhiǧ," 17.

[287] The *ʿulamāʾ* have acquired knowledge of theology, law, and similar subjects. The *ḥukamāʾ* have acquired knowledge of ethics and act according to them. The *kubarāʾ* have acquired the divinely-provided knowledge. Ragib, "On the Ordering of Intellectual Disciplines and of Worldly Actions," 222. ——. *Carullah 84*. f.42a. The Hadith that Ragib quotes in both these places: "ask the scholars, mix with the wise, and sit with the senior figures" is found in the collection of the Sufi Hadith specialist al-Ḥakīm at-Tirmiḏī (Abū ʿAbdallāh Muḥammad, d. ca. 320/938) and is also used by Ragib in *The Path to the Nobilities*. Abū ʿAbdallāh al-Ḥakīm at-Tirmiḏī, *Nawādir al-Uṣūl fī Maʿrifat Aḥādīṯ ar-Rasūl*, ed. Ismāʿīl Ibrāhīm Mutawallī ʿAwaḍ, 2 vols. (Cairo: Maktabat al-Imām al-Buḫārī, 2008). 1:434. Ragib, *The Path to the Nobilities*, 123 (and note 2).

[288] ——, *The Path to the Nobilities*, 268, 281. Madelung, "Ar-Rāġib," 162.

the angelic, the "real believers", are those who "use their reason as much as possible".[289] Ragib's angelic humans are thinkers.

The divinely provided knowledge that some humans are able to access provides them with certainty (*yaqīn*).[290] It is the sort of certainty that humans require when faced with problems such as unclear verses in the Quran (*al-mutašābih*), and Ragib's solution to that problem is to posit the existence of scholars who are firmly-rooted in knowledge (*ar-rāsiḫūna fī-l-ʿilm*) and are able to deal with the lack of clarity in some verses because they are always able to determine which interpretative option is correct.[291] The status of these people, which Ragib describes as almost approaching the level of prophecy, relies upon God having endowed humans with the ability to think and through their thinking (*al-fikr wa-t-tamyīz*) to become his vicegerents on the earth, a rank which is of course the ethical goal for humanity that Ragib laid out in *The Path to the Nobilities*.[292]

On the one hand, just as Abū Manṣūr thought no-one at the time he was writing could attain such a rank, the only examples Ragib gives of humans who attained it are perhaps self-

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[289] *fa-l-malakīyu –llaḏī yastaʿmalu –l-quwwata –l-ʿāqilata bi-qadri ğahdihī wa-hum –l-muʾminīna ḥaqqan*. Ragib, *The Path to the Nobilities*, 128.

[290] ———, *On Creeds*, 92. ———, "On the Ordering of Intellectual Disciplines and of Worldly Actions," 220.

[291] Doubt (*šubhah*) is the failure to distinguish between two things that are similar to each other (*tašābuh*), and Ragib defines the *rāsiḫūna fī-l-ʿilm* as those unaffected by it. ———, *Quranic Glossary*, 352. Ragib understands unclear verses in the Quran as falling into three main categories: the wholly unknowable (the day of judgement etc.); the knowable through study (rare Quranic words); and an intermediate category that can only be understood by *ar-rāsiḫūna fī-l-ʿilm*. This means that Quran 4:126 can be read both ways depending on which category of *al-mutašābih* is being dealt with. Either "no-one can interpret unclear verses in the Quran apart from God, and those firmly-rooted in knowledge say "we believe in it" or "no-one can interpret unclear verses in the Quran apart from God and the firmly-rooted in knowledge, who [also] say "we believe in it". ———, *Exegesis ed. aš-Šidī*, 412-430. ———, *Exegesis ed. Sardār*, 226-230. ———, *Methodological Introduction and Exegesis ed. Farḥāt*, 74, 89. ———, "Methodological Introduction ed. Nāhī," 108-109, 117-118. ———, *Quranic Glossary*, 352, 443-445. See also discussion below at note 442.

[292] It is the most noble rank that the wise can attain (*ašraf manzilah li-l-ḥukamāʾ*). ———, *Exegesis ed. aš-Šidī*, 427. ———, *Methodological Introduction and Exegesis ed. Farḥāt*, 89. ———, "Methodological Introduction ed. Nāhī," 117-118. See also note 446 below.

consciously uncontroversial and from the earliest years of Islam: "Ibn ʿAbbās, ʿAlī, and others"

were firmly-rooted in knowledge. Divinely-provided knowledge is restricted to "prophets and

some saints (*awliyāʾ*).[293] Ragib describes ʿAlī as having certainty through divinely-provided

knowledge, and as having reached the stage at which the veil was withdrawn. "Other wise men"

who had attained this stage described it as seeing God in everything they saw.[294] On the other

hand, Ragib devoted his pedagogical and ethical works to explicitly encouraging his readers to

strive to attain this rank, to become as good as or better than the angels, and to deserve to be

described as human beings and God's vicegerents on earth.[295] Scholars should try to be saints.[296]

Ragib believed that the only way that humans had been able, and were now able, to achieve

this top level of divine certainty was through external acts of piety coupled with internal thought

and reflection. Scholars must purify their souls in order for their minds to be clear, and to purify

their souls they must act righteously.[297] The broad claim that knowledge and action (*al-ʿilm wa-l-*

ʿamal) should be combined was not a new one, nor was it particularly controversial.[298] However,

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[293] Abū al-ʿAbbās ʿAbdallāh b. al-ʿAbbās (d. 68/688), such an omnipresent figure in exegesis, including Ragib's *Exegesis*, that he was known as the "father of exegesis". ———, *Exegesis ed. aš-Šidī*, 422-423. ———, *On Creeds*, 92.

[294] ———, *On Creeds*, 94-95.

[295] ———, *Analysis of the Two Creations*, 186 (chapter 33). ———, *The Path to the Nobilities*, 59. For a comparative use of the verb *istaḥaqqa* see Peters' discussion of how al-Qāḍī ʿAbd al-Ǧabbār analysed the relationship between a known reality and its description as "entitlement". Peters, *God's created speech*, 152-153.

[296] Ragib writes that Quran 3:79's "be divine" (*kūnū rabbānīyina*) means "be wise saints for God" (*ḥukamāʾ awliyāʾ li-llāh*) and continues: "it is said that if the scholars are not saints then God will have no saint on earth" (*fa-qad qīla in lam yakun –l-ʿulamāʾu awliyāʾa li-llāhi fa-laysa li-llāhi fī-l-arḍi walīy*). Ragib, *Exegesis ed. aš-Šidī*, 672.

[297] ———, *On Creeds*, 92. ———, "On the Ordering of Intellectual Disciplines and of Worldly Actions," 220.

[298]*al-ḥikmatu iṣābatu –l-ḥaqqi bi-l-ʿilmi wa-l-ʿfiʿl.* ———. *Mufradāt al-Ḫaṭīb Collection*. f.43a. Dāwūdī has *al-ʿaql* for *al-fiʿl.* ———, *Quranic Glossary*, 249. "The core of belief is true knowledge and pious action" (*aṣlu –l-īmāni –l-ʿulūmu -ṣ-ṣādiqati wa-a ʿmālu -ṣ-ṣāliḥah*). ———. *Carullah 84*. f.42a. Cf. Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal, "ar-Radd ʿalā az-Zanādiqah wa-l-Ǧahmīyah," in *ʿAqāʾid as-Salaf*, ed. ʿAlī Sāmī an-Naššār and ʿAmmār aṭ-Ṭālibī (Alexandria: al-Maʿārif, 1971), 112-114. For knowledge and action more broadly see: Erik S Ohlander, "Action, in Ṣūfism," in *Encyclopaedia of Islam, THREE*, ed. Gudrun Krämer, Denis Matringe, John Nawas, and Everett Rowson (Brill

Ragib knew that the specific mystic conviction that knowledge could be accessed through pious acts rather than books or lessons was not shared by all his contemporaries. He wrote in *On Creeds* that theologians (*al-mutakallimūn*) thought it unlikely, and in *On the Ordering of Intellectual Disciplines* that it was rejected by some dialecticians (*baʿḍ al-ǧadalīyīn*).[299] He gave the idea its clearest expression in his *Exegesis* of Quran 3:103 where he wrote that a level could be reached in which the Quran and Sunna were no longer necessary.[300] The only circles in which such an idea would have been acceptable were Sufi.

Wise Philosophers (al-ḥukamāʾ)

It is a little bit of a stretch to translate *ḥukamāʾ* as "wise philosophers". Ragib's idea of "wisdom" (*al-ḥikmah*) was broader than what we mean by philosophy today in the English language. As we have seen above, "the wise" (*al-ḥukamāʾ*) included mystics who had attained a level of spiritual and intellectual achievement that brought them close to God, rather than those schooled in the works of Plato and Aristotle. Nevertheless, Ragib was familiar with the ideas of Hellenistic philosophy and we can see evidence of this throughout his works. Hellenistic philosophy was something that he was prepared to use and admire, but just as with the partisans of Hadith, the Sufis, and the theologians it was not an intellectual habitus with which he directly identified himself.

Online: Brill, 2011).

[299] Ragib, *On Creeds*, 93. ———, "On the Ordering of Intellectual Disciplines and of Worldly Actions," 221.

[300] The verse talks of the rope of God (*ḥabl allāh*), which Ragib says is the Quran and the Sunna. The three stages are reliance on God (*al-iʿtiṣām*), faith in God (*at-tawakkul*), and then submission to God (*al-islām*) at which point the rope is no longer needed and the believer becomes as if God was a part of him (*istaġnā ḥīyna ʾiḏan ʿan –l-wasāʾiti –llaḏīna hum ḥablu –llāhi wa-yaṣīru mimman qāla (ṣ) fīhi ḥikāyatan ʿan allāhi fa-iḏā aḥbabtuhū kuntu samʿahū*). Aš-Šidī describes this position disapprovingly as "extreme Sufism". ———, *Exegesis ed. aš-Šidī*, 766-767. For the Hadith (*Qudsī*) see: Ibn Ḥaǧar, *Fatḥ al-Bārī*, 14:414f (#6502).

Ragib's definition of wisdom in *The Path to the Nobilities* shows that he felt Hellenistic philosophy was just one of the sources of knowledge available to him: "wisdom is a name for any good knowledge and any good action", and it "has been defined with different expressions according to different perspectives". The first perspective he reports defines wisdom as: "knowledge of the things that exist as they really are, which must mean universal categories of things because human knowledge is incapable of encompassing every specific thing".[301] These are common phrases with which Ragib's contemporaries would define the purpose of Hellenistic philosophy (*al-falsafah*).[302]

We have already seen that Ragib was included by al-Bayhaqī in a compilation of those working in the Hellenistic philosophical tradition, and this is confirmed by the contexts in which Faḫr ad-Dīn ar-Rāzī mentioned Ragib. In *Asās at-Taqdīs* (*The Foundations of Sanctification*) Faḫr ad-Dīn was justifying his principle, with specific reference to God, that things could exist

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[301] *wa-amma –l-ḥikmatu fa-smun li-kulli ʿilmin ḥasanin wa-ʿamalin ṣāliḥin ... wa-qad ḥuddat –l-ḥikmatu bi-alfāẓin muḫtalifatin ʿalā naẓarātin muḫtalifatin fa-qīla hiya maʿrifatu –l-ašyāʾi –l-mawǧūdati bi-ḥaqāʾiqihā wa-yaʿnī kullīyāta –l-ašyāʾi fa-ammā ǧuzʾīyātuhā fa-lā sabīla li-l-bašari ilā –l-aḥāṭati bi-hā*. Ragib, *The Path to the Nobilities*, 141.

[302] Avicenna opened his major philosophical work (*aš-Šifāʾ*) with the statement that the aim of *falsafah* was to comprehend "all things as they really are" (*al-ġaraḍu fī-l-falsafati an yūqafa ʿalā ḥaqāʾiqi –l-ašyāʾi kullihā*). Abū ʿAlī al-Ḥusayn Avicenna (Ibn Sīnā), "aš-Šifāʾ: al-Manṭiq I (al-Madḫal)," in *aš-Šifāʾ*, ed. Ibrāhīm Madkūr (Cairo: Wizārat al-Maʿārif al-ʿUmūmīyah, 1952; reprint, Qum: Ẕovī el-Qurbā, 2007), 12. On a less elevated scholarly plane, Ibn Farīġūn wrote that the aim of *falsafah* was "the essence of things as they really are" (*kunh ḥaqāʾiq al-ašyāʾ*). Ibn Farīġūn, *Jawāmiʿ al-ʿUlūm*, ed. Fuat Sezgin (Frankfurt: Institute for the History of Arabic-Islamic Science at the Johann Wolfgang Goethe University, 1985). 143. ———, *Ǧawāmiʿ al-ʿUlūm*, ed. Qays Kāẓim al-Ǧābī (Cairo: Maktabat aṯ-Ṯaqāfah ad-Dīnīyah, 2007). 254. Ibn Farīġūn was a student of Abū Zayd Aḥmad b. Sahl al-Balḫī, d. 322/934, who was one of Ragib's sources in the *Exegesis*. Ragib. *Carullah 84*. f.17a, f.66a. ———, *Exegesis ed. aš-Šidī*, 492, 523. ———, *Exegesis ed. Sardār*, 175. For more on Ibn Farīġūn, see: Hans Hinrich Biesterfeldt, "Ibn Farīġūn on Communication," in *In the age of al-Fārābī: Arabic philosophy in the fourth/tenth century*, ed. Peter Adamson (London: Warburg Institute. Nino Aragno, 2008). ———, "Medieval Arabic Encyclopedias of Science & Philosophy," in *The Medieval Hebrew Encyclopedias of Science and Philosophy*, ed. Steven Harvey (Boston: Kluwer, 2000), 84-85. Dimitri Gutas, *Avicenna and the Aristotelian tradition: introduction to reading Avicenna's philosophical works* (Leiden: Brill, 1988). 245-248. Franz Rosenthal, *A History of Muslim Historiography* (Leiden: Brill, 1952). 34-36. V. Minorsky, "Ibn Farīġūn and the Ḥudūd al-Aʿlām," in *A Locust's Leg: studies in honour of S. H. Taqizadeh*, ed. W. B. Henning and E. Yarshater (London: P. Lund, 1962). D.M. Dunlop, "The Ǧawāmiʿ al-ʿUlūm of Ibn Farīġūn," in *Zeki Velidi Toganʾa Armağan: Symbolae in Honorem Z. V. Togan* (Istanbul: 1950-1955). Helmut Ritter, "Philologika XIII: Arabische Handschriften in Anatolien und Istanbul," *Oriens* 3, no. 1 (1950): 83-85.

and yet be imperceptible and outside of space and time. He wrote that Hellenistic philosophers agreed on the existence of substance, souls, and intellects that were imperceptible and immaterial in this way and he gave four examples of scholars who held this position: a Muʿtazilī, a Shia, and from his own Sunni community, Ragib and al-Ġazālī.[303] In his *Exegesis*, Faḫr ad-Dīn describes the idea that humans are immaterial and immortal souls and says that it is held by the majority of metaphysical Hellenistic philosophers (*al-ilāhīyīn min al-falāsifah*) and "a large number of Muslim scholars", which includes the same Muʿtazilī and Shia names together with al-Ġazālī and Ragib.[304]

Ragib had indeed held the position that things could exist immaterially, writing in *On Creeds* that "most reasonable scholars" believed that, for example, angels and jinn consisted of pure imperceptible soul.[305] However, it appears that Faḫr ad-Dīn went too far in associating Ragib with Hellenistic philosophers, attributing to him the position that human existence is in the immaterial soul and not the body (*al-insānu mawǧūdun laysa bi-ǧismin wa-lā ǧismānīyah*). In fact Ragib, who was well aware that others believed only the soul was resurrected, maintained that humans were made up of the combination of body and soul and that their bodies would be resurrected on the day of judgement.[306] Ragib identified these others with whom he disagreed as Hellenistic philosophers and the Ismāʿīlīyah (*al-falāsifah wa-l-bāṭinīyah*).[307]

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[303] Muʿammar b. ʿAbbād as-Sulami (d. 215/830) *min al-muʿtazilah* and aš-Šayḫ al-Mufīd *min ar-rāfiḍah*. ar-Rāzī, *Asās at-Taqdīs*, 15-17.

[304] Faḫr ad-Dīn ar-Rāzī, *Mafātīḥ*, 21:46 (Quran 17:85).

[305] *ǧull al-ʿuqalāʾ*. Ragib, *On Creeds*, 145.

[306] Ragib writes that the soul leaves the body at death and returns to it on the final day in order for the body to be resurrected. Ibid., 203, 224-225. ———, *The Path to the Nobilities*, 72-73. ———, *Analysis of the Two Creations*, 60-62 (chapter 7).

[307] ———, *On Creeds*, 224. The term *al-bāṭinīyah* ("internalists") was usually a pejorative term for the Ismāʿīlīyah,

Ragib was by no means the only scholar at the end of the tenth and beginning of the

eleventh century to make use of Hellenistic philosophy while at the same time maintaining a

commitment to Sunni Islam. Many of his ideas are shared with Miskawayh (Abū ʿAlī Aḥmad, d.

421/ 1030),[308] al-ʿĀmirī (Abū al-Ḥasan Muḥammad, d. 381/ 992), and the Iḫwān aṣ-Ṣafāʾ (ca.

949-983). However, he stands out among this group as the only scholar to have also written

popular and influential exegesis.

Ideas from Hellenistic philosophy are found throughout Ragib's work, although they are

most concentrated in the *Analysis of the Two Creations*. They range from God as a being

necessary of existence, an unmoved mover beyond the heavenly spheres at the top of a chain of

causality,[309] to the creation of the reason before anything else followed by the four elements,[310]

the first intellect and the active intellect,[311] the human being as a microcosm,[312] and the

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who at this time were making their big push from Fatimite Egypt into Abbasid Iran and Iraq (Avicenna's father had been an Ismāʿīlī *dāʿī*). Although we know very little about the Ismāʿīlīyah in Isfahan at this time (Durand-Guédy, *Iranian Elites*, 142f.), this reference to *al-bāṭinīyah* is one of a number that make it hard to imagine Ragib could have had any Ismāʿīlī sympathies. Ragib also attacks *bāṭinīyah* esotericism as a barrier to clear understanding of the Quran (Ragib, *Methodological Introduction and Exegesis ed. Farḥāt*, 75. ———, "Methodological Introduction ed. Nāḥī," 109.) Al-ʿĀmirī (d. 381/992) identifies those who disagree with Ragib's position that souls return to their bodies for resurrection (a belief that al-ʿĀmirī identifies as that of "the majority of the people of Islam") as Stoic philosophers. Abū al-Ḥasan Muḥammad ibn Yūsuf al-ʿĀmirī and Everett Rowson, *A Muslim philosopher on the soul and its fate: Al-ʿĀmirī's Kitāb al-Amad ʿalā l-Abad*, American Oriental Series (New Haven: American Oriental Society, 1988). 160-163.

[308] Ragib's idea that humans should and could emulate the angels was present in the circle around Miskawayh in Baghdad. The phrase "for humans are likenesses of the angels" (*fa-l-insānu amṯilatu –l-malāʾikah*) comes in the concluding paragraphs of a passage that puports to be Platonic, and that details the connections between the divine and humanity. Elvira Wakelnig, *A Philosophy Reader from the Circle of Miskawayh*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, forthcoming), #25 (13v). For further comparison of Ragib and Miskawayh's ethical ideas see: Daiber, "Griechische Ethik." Mohamed, "Ethical Philosophy." ———, "Knowledge and Purification." Ragib and Mohamed, *The Path to Virtue*.

[309] Ragib does stress, against the errors of "some of the wise", that the heavenly spheres are not eternal. Ragib, *On Creeds*, 47-56. Wisnovsky has highlighted the connection to Avicenna's idea of the necessary of existence (*wāǧib al-wuǧūd*). Wisnovsky, "One Aspect of the Avicennian Turn," 88-89.

[310] Ragib, *Analysis of the Two Creations*, 40-41 (chapter 2). For Madelung this is evidence that al-Bayhaqī was right to class Ragib as a Hellenistic philosopher. Madelung, "Ar-Rāġib," 161.

[311] Ragib discusses God's creation of the first intellect in *Analysis*, and rejects the idea that God is coterminous with anything called the active intellect in *On Creeds*. Ragib, *Analysis of the Two Creations*, 41 (chapter 2). ———, *On*

injunction to "know thyself".[313] Ragib is most attracted to those elements of the philosophical tradition, like the human as microcosm (found in the *Quranic Glossary* as well as the *Analysis*), that enable him to argue for the human duty to emulate and approach the divine. Where the philosophical tradition restricts his ability to lay out his ambitious ethical goal for humanity, he rejects it. Ragib reads Quran 2:31, in which God instructs Adam to demonstrate his superior knowledge to the angels, as being in part a reminder that while previous traditions have regarded the human concupiscent and irascible faculties as weaknesses, the God of the Quran regards them as a constitution that uniquely qualifies humans to become God's vicegerents.[314] The ethical ideal of vicegerency to God (*ḫilāfah*) is central to Ragib's ethics, and is itself found in both al-ʿĀmirī and the Iḫwān aṣ-Ṣafāʾ.[315]

Ragib never mentions the persistently mysterious and anonymous group of tenth-century authors known as the Iḫwān aṣ-Ṣafāʾ, but he does share a number of their positions on key

Creeds, 63.

[312] ———, *Quranic Glossary*, 582. ———, *The Path to the Nobilities*, 73. ———, *Analysis of the Two Creations*, 51, 65, 169 (chapters 4, 9, 31). See also: Daiber, "Griechische Ethik," 186. Mohamed, "Knowledge and Purification," 18-22.

[313] Ragib, *Analysis of the Two Creations*, 29, 33 (intro., chapter 1).

[314] For the division of the soul into rational, concupiscent, and irascible faculties, the latter two of which should be subservient to the first, see: Plato, *The Republic*, trans. Desmond Lee, Penguin Classics (London: Penguin, 1955; repr., 2003). 434b-442b. Cf. al-ʿĀmirī and Rowson, *A Muslim philosopher*, 264. Ragib's exegesis of Quran 2:31 reads:

> …[as for that] human composition of different faculties, two of which are those that have been considered corrupting (by which I mean the concupiscent and irascible), God cautions them that even though there are some corrupting elements therein there are also numerous benefits, and the vicegerency for which humans are nominated can only be achieved with this composition. (…*tarkība –l-insāni min –l-quwā –l-mutafāwitati –llatī minhā l-quwwatāni –llatāni kānū yarawnahumā mufsidatayani a ʿnī aš-šahwīyata wa-l-ġaḍabīyata wa-nabbahahum [allāh] anna ḏālika wa-in kāna fīhi mufsidatan mā fa-fīhi maṣāliḥun kaṯīratun wa-anna –l-ḫilāfata –llatī ruššiḥa la-hā –l-insānu fī-l-arḍi lā yuṣlaḥu la-hā illā hāḏa –t-tarkīb*)

Ragib. *Carullah 84*. f.27a.

[315] For al-ʿĀmirī the most specific purpose of the human rational soul is to be God's *ḫalīfah* on earth. al-ʿĀmirī and Rowson, *A Muslim philosopher*, 97, 118-119, 138-139, 268. Iḫwān aṣ-Ṣafāʾ, *Rasāʾil Iḫwān aṣ-Ṣafāʾ wa Ḫullān al-Wafāʾ*, 4 vols. (Beirut: Dār Ṣādir, 1957; repr., 2008). 4:125. Daiber writes that the Quranic idea (Quran 2:30, 6:165 (al-Anʿām), 7:129 (al-Aʿrāf) etc.) of *ḫilāfah* is what connects Ragib's Neoplatonic ethics with the *šarīʿah*. Daiber, "Griechische Ethik," 185.

issues.[316] Their combination of a rigorous and rational Neoplatonism with a commitment to

Islamic ethics and revelation is a likely source for some of his ideas. The Iḫwān share Ragib's

belief that humanity must try to emulate the divine, his stress on the importance of pious self-

purification alongside intellectual endeavour, his equation of reason and revelation,[317] his

sympathy for ʿAlī,[318] and his position on the physical resurrection of bodies when their souls are

returned to them.[319] The most salient difference between them is one of audience, and of

emphasis. While Ragib wrote reference works and pedagogical ethics in public, the anonymous

Iḫwān produced an intellectual manifesto for a restricted elite.

Ragib was also attracted to those elements of the Hellenistic tradition that helped him

explain definitions and word meanings. In his exegesis and ethics he uses the vocabulary of

genus and species, necessary accidents and differentia, apodictic proof,[320] and conception and

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[316] For introductions to the Iḫwān, see: Godefroid de Callataÿ, *Ikhwan al-Safa': a brotherhood of idealists on the fringe of orthodox Islam*, Makers of the Muslim world. (Oxford: Oneworld, 2005). Ian Richard Netton, *Muslim Neoplatonists : an introduction to the thought of the Brethren of Purity (Ikhwān al-Ṣafāʾ)* (London / New York: Routledge / Curzon, 2002).

[317] Passages such as the following, from the Iḫwān's fourteenth letter, could have provided much of the material for Ragib's central ethical claims.

> Know that the philosophical disciplines and the prophetic religious law (*alʿulūm al-ḥikmīyah wa-š-šarīʿah an-nubūwīyah*) are two divine entities that agree with regard to their aim, which is a principle, and they differ in the applications of that principle. The ultimate goal of philosophy is that which can be described as emulation of the divine according to human ability, as we have explained in all of our letters. Philosophy is based on four characteristics: knowledge of existents as they really are (*maʿrifat ḥaqāʾiq al-mawğūdāt*), correct beliefs, good morals and praiseworthy disposition, and pure actions and good deeds. The aim of these characteristics is the correction of the soul … so that it can ascend to be with the angels, who are of the same species. The aim of prophecy (*an-nubuwwah wa-n-nāmūs*) is also the correction and reform of the human soul in order to deliver it from the hell of a world of generation and corruption and bring it to paradise … For this is the aim of both the disciplines of philosophy and of the prophetic religious law.

Iḫwān aṣ-Ṣafāʾ, *Rasāʾil, Beirut*, 3:30. Cf. Callataÿ, *Ikhwan al-Safa'*, 80.

[318] Netton, *Muslim Neoplatonists*, 100. De Callataÿ goes further and argues for their Shia affiliation and their millenarianism, neither of which would have been shared by Ragib. Callataÿ, *Ikhwan al-Safa'*, 54, 57, 96, 99-100.

[319] Iḫwān aṣ-Ṣafāʾ, *Rasāʾil, Beirut*, 3:301.

[320] Ragib writes that a single idea can be indicated by a number of things: a name such as "human"; one of its necessary accidents (*ḫaṣāʾiṣ lāzim*) such as "upright", "walking on legs", or "broad of fingernail" [the fourth

assent (*taṣawwur wa-taṣdīq*).[321] He also ascribes such terminology to "logic" and "logicians" (*al-manṭiq*, *al-manṭiqīyūn*), a discipline with which he seems familiar and that, unlike theology, nowhere attracted his opprobrium.[322] Not everyone that Ragib encountered was as comfortable with the use of such terminology across political and cultural divides. In *On the Ordering of Intellectual Disciplines* Ragib tells us how a senior scholar refused to even say the word "potentiality" (*quwwah*) and exclaimed: "this expression is used by philosophers so instead I say 'ability' (*qudrah*)!" Ragib was dismissive of this stance: "it was as if he didn't know the difference between the two words in common usage, never mind among specialists!"[323]

In the final analysis Ragib is always defined by the combinations that he made, whether of logic and exegesis, Neoplatonic ethics and Ḥanbalī mysticism, or reason and revelation. The group that he said he approved of, traditionists, senior Sufis, and wise philosophers, is itself a

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universal]; or one of its specific differentiae (*faṣl lāzim*) such as "speaking" or "dying" [the third universal]. Ragib, *Methodological Introduction and Exegesis ed. Farḥāt*, 52. ———, "Methodological Introduction ed. Nāhī," 95. He defines *burhān* as apodeictic proof (*allaḏī yaqtaḍī -ṣ-ṣidqa abadan lā maḥālah*). ———, *Quranic Glossary*, 121.

[321] "Intellectual disciplines are achieved through two channels: conception and assent" (*al-ʿulūmu min ḥayṯu –l-kayfīyati ḍarbāni taṣawwurun wa-taṣdīq*). He goes on to give examples of both and explain that conception is an idea, whereas assent is conception with the addition of proof (*wa-t-taṣdīqu huwa an yutaṣawwara –š-šayʾu wa-yaṯbutu ʿindahū bi-dalālatin taqtaḍī ṣiḥḥatahū*). ———, *Analysis of the Two Creations*, 139-140 (chapter 23). This understanding of conception and assent is shared by Avicenna. Avicenna (Ibn Sīnā), "al-Madḫal," 17 (line 7f). See also: A. I. Sabra, "Avicenna on the Subject Matter of Logic," *The Journal of Philosophy* 77, no. 11 (1980): 757-762.

[322] In his *Quranic Glossary* discussion of *al-qawl* Ragib writes that:
> Logicians have a meaning unique to them: definition. They say the *qawl* of the substance, or the *qawl* of the accident. By this they mean its definition. (*yastaʿmiluhū –l-manṭiqīyūna dūna ġayrihim fī maʿnā –l-ḥaddi fa-yaqūlūna qawlu –l-ğawhari kaḏā wa-qawlu –l-ʿaraḍi kaḏā ay ḥadduhumā*).

Ragib, *Quranic Glossary*, 688 (cf. 267, 811). The phrase *qawl al-ğawhar* is inherited from the Arabic translations of Aristotle. The Greek λόγος τῆς οὐσίας ("the word about / definition of the substance") having been translated as *qawl al-ğawhar*. Aristotle, "Categories," 1a. ———, *Organon Aristotelis in versione Arabica antiqua / Manṭiq Aristū*, ed. ʿAbd ar-Raḥmān Badawī, 3 vols. (Cairo: Dār al-Kutub al-Miṣrīyah, 1948). 3.

[323] *ka-annahū lam yaʿlam mā baynahumā min –l-farqi fī taʿārufi ʿawāmmi –n-nāsi faḍlan ʿan ḫawāṣṣihim*. Ragib, "On the Ordering of Intellectual Disciplines and of Worldly Actions," 214. Elsewhere Ragib explains that *quwwah* is an inevitable force in something (such as burning in fire) whereas *qudrah* is a force that the agent may choose whether or not to use. ———, *On Creeds*, 280. NB: on line 3 of p.280 al-ʿA ̇ğalī has the erroneous *qāla fa-l-quwwah* while all four mss. have *qāla fa-l-qudrah*.———. *Āstān-e Quds-e Rażāvī 56*. f.52b; ibid., f.84b; ———. *Sehid Ali 382*. f.51a; ———. *Feyzullah Efendi 2141*. f.78b.

combination in which we can trace the traditionists to the Ḥanābilah, the wise philosophers to scholars such as the Iḫwān aṣ-Ṣafāʾ, and the senior Sufis to the Sufis of Isfahan. Few of these parties would have been at all happy to have been combined with each other, and yet Ragib would not be last to attempt such a synthesis.

Ragib's Beliefs

The exercise of trying to understand Ragib through his real or potential affiliations has proved to be useful up to a point. I will now translate a brief example of his exegesis to complete the picture.

> 'Whenever we abrogate a verse or cause it to be forgotten, we bring another verse better than it or of a similar status; do you not know that God can do anything?' (Quran 2:106).
>
> I have discussed the essence (*māʾiyah*) of abrogation and the difference between it and specification at the start of this book.[324] The lexicographical understanding of abrogation is that it is when an image moves from one thing onto another, like the shadow moving over the sun.[325] … Exegetes have interpreted abrogation and causing to be forgotten in two ways. The first way is that abrogation is the removal of the verse's authority while its expressions remain and the removal of the verse's judgement along with its expressions. Causing to forget is equivalent and means that the verse is not abrogated but is recited.[326] The second way is that abrogation is the removal of just the judgement, whether or not the expression remains, and that causing to forget is the removal of the expression, whether or not the judgement remains … Therefore we say, and success lies with God, that he created

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[324] ———, "Methodological Introduction ed. Nāhī," 114-115; ———, *Methodological Introduction and Exegesis ed. Farḥāt*, 82-85.

[325] *an-nasḫu fī-l-luġati izālatu -ṣ-ṣūrati ʿan aš-šayʾi wa-iṯbātuhā fī ġayrihī ka-nasḫi -ẓ-ẓalli li-š-šams*. Cf. ———, *Quranic Glossary*, 801.

[326] *an-nasḫu huwa izālatu –l-mulki min ġayri –l-lafẓi wa-l-ḥukmi maʿa –l-lafẓi wa-l-insāʾu muqabilatun wa-huwa an lā yunsaḫu bal yuqraʾ*. ———. *Carullah 84*. f.85a (line 1f). Ayasofya 212 has *al-ḥukm* for *al-mulk*. ———. *Ms. of Tafsīr [Methodological Introduction plus Exegesis of Quran 1:1 to Quran 2:223]*. Ayasofya 212 (dated ?), Süleymaniye, Istanbul. (Quran 2:106). Cf. ʿImād ad-Dīn Abū al-Fidāʾ Ismāʿīl Ibn Kaṯīr, *Tafsīr Ibn Kaṯīr*, ed. Muṣṭafā Saʿīd al-Ḫinn, 2 vols. (Beirut: Muʾassasat ar-Risālah, 2002). 1:103 (right-hand column).

us on the earth as his vicegerents in it and inhabitants of it in order to become close to him and to approach him in a life after which there will be no death and in which there will be no want, and we will have ability unaffected by any disability. The only way to attain this is with a healthy soul, and its health has two components: knowledge and action … likewise the only way to attain a healthy soul is through two good things: one is internal and is reason, and one is external and is the Prophet … Aš-Šāfiʿī and his followers have used this verse to argue for their position that the Quran can only be abrogated by the Quran[327] … and the Sunna is indeed not better than any verse of the Quran, nor is it of similar status ... but although God said 'a verse' he meant 'a judgement' because abrogation only occurs with regard to judgements.[328] Therefore his words 'better than it or of a similar status' only refer to the verse's judgements and it is as if the verse read "whenever we abrogate a judgement, we bring another judgement better than it or of a similar status". That is the central point of God's speech here (fa-ʿalā hāḏā madāru –l-kalām). Those committed to literal interpretation (ahl aẓ-ẓāhir) use this verse when they maintain that the abrogating verse has to be lighter than the abrogated, and they took lightness to mean that which the soul naturally finds more pleasant (mā yastaḫiffu –n-nafsu bi-ṭ-ṭabʿ).[329] This is unlikely, for the revealed law (aš-šarīʿah) is built upon the principle of contradicting the soul and rejecting that which nature [seems to] require … for those divine matters that are pleasant and easy in this world and the next are exactly those which the soul finds burdensome…[330]

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[327] See Muḥammad Idrīs aš-Šāfiʿī, ar-Risālah, ed. Aḥmad Muḥammad Šākir (Cairo: Muṣṭafā al-Bābī al-Ḥalabī, 1938). 106. Lowry, *Early Islamic Legal Theory*, 90.

[328] Ragib argues in the omitted portion that the Šāfiʿī position rests on the Quran's superior status as opposed to the Sunna. It is, after all inimitable while the Sunna is not. The claim that abrogation only occurs with regard to judgements then makes the Šāfiʿī distinction between Quran and Sunna irrelevant because they only represent different forms of divine judgement. I have not found this argument anywhere else. When the statement "abrogation only occurs with regard to judgements" was made by later authors (ʿAlāʾ ad-Dīn al-Buḫārī dies in 730/1330) it referred to abrogation being permissable in judgements but not in historical narratives (aḫbār). ʿAlāʾ ad-Dīn al-Buḫārī, Kašf al-Asrār ʿalā Uṣūl al-Imām Faḫr al-Islām ʿAlī b. Muḥammad al-Bazdawī, 4 vols. (Cairo: Dār al-Kitāb al-Islāmī, 1917). 3:198.

[329] Al-Ǧaṣṣāṣ relates this position (qāla āḫarūna lā yunsaḫu ḥukmun illā bi-mā aḫaffu minhu) and disagrees with it, allowing abrogation by both what is lighter and what is more burdonsome for the person concerned. al-Ǧaṣṣāṣ, Uṣūl al-Fiqh, 2:223. Ahl aẓ-ẓāhir may be a reference to the Ẓāhirī school of theology and legal interpretation, for whom see: Vishanoff, *Islamic Hermeneutics*, 78-88.

[330] Ragib. *Carullah 84*. f.84 (lines 12f, 21f), f.85a (lines 1f, 12f, 18f) f. 86a (lines 14f, 20f), f.86b (lines 1f, 12f).

All the salient aspects of Ragib's belief system are here, from the initial reliance on lexicography, to the technical discussions of exegetical theory, the knowledge of the legal implications of exegesis, and then the ethical and religious goal of becoming God's vicegerent on earth, a goal which can only be attained by a mystic, and perhaps even Neoplatonist, insistence on suppressing one's soul's base natural desires.

This is what Ragib believed. It is a combination of monotheism, Hellenistic ethics, and mysticism that he thought was reasonable and rational. When he encountered opposition to his beliefs, that opposition consisted of rival exegetical options ranging from a rejection of anything mystic in favour of reasoned theologies, to a complete rejection of any reasoning, to even a rival cosmology in which the heavenly spheres were eternal and Islamic revelation was almost irrelevant. It is possible that he encountered some form of scientifically based unbelief; the adherents of which he referred to as "naturalists" (*aṭ-ṭabīʿiyūn*), but their numbers scarcely represented a threat.[331]

Nevertheless, Ragib did discuss the problem that some people with reputations for abundant rationality denied the existence of the afterlife. Their denial in turn led ignorant people to say "if they don't believe in it, and they are so rational, it must not be true". Ragib explained that the error lay in a failure to understand that reason can only master either the question of the afterlife or the matters of this world. If, as is the case with those who have reputations for deep

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[331] These naturalists denied the existence of anything purely spiritual because it lacked a sensible origin, and they denied that an afterlife exists ———, *On Creeds*, 145. Patricia Crone, to whom I am grateful for the following references, writes that the *ṭabīʿiyūn*, or *aṣḥāb aṭ-ṭabāʾiʿ*, "were empiricists in the sense of that they held all genuine knowledge to be based on sense impressions in conjunction with reasoning", and were so called because of their belief that the world is composed of four natures (hot, cold, wet and dry). Crone, Patricia "The Dahrīs According to al-Jāḥiẓ" Mélanges de l'Université Saint-Joseph, forthcoming. See also: al-Ašʿarī, *Maqālāt*, 348. Abū al-Ḥusayn al-Baṣrī, *Taṣaffuh al-Adillah: the extant parts introduced and edited*, ed. Wilferd Madelung and Sabine Schmidtke (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2006). 82. Muḥammad b. ʿAbd al-Karīm aš-Šahrastānī, *Kitāb al-Milal wa-n-Niḥal*, ed. Muḥammad b. Fatḥallāh Badrān (Cairo: Maṭbaʿat al-Azhar, 1947-1955). 661. For some mediaeval authors the *aṣḥāb aṭ-ṭabāʾiʿ* are coterminous with the *dahrīyūn* (deniers of the afterlife / eternalists), for whom see Martin J. McDermott, "Abū ʿĪsā al-Warrāq on the Dahriyya," *Mélanges de l'Université Saint-Joseph* 50(1984).

rational investigation of this world (whom I assume to be the naturalists mentioned above), their reason is addicted to the profane sphere, and is inevitably unable to cope with the question of the afterlife.[332]

In our terms, Ragib's conclusion is that too much effort spent on natural science renders a rational person unable to comprehend what they could otherwise understand, for example, that an eternal afterlife exists. His beliefs rest on very different assumptions about human reason and its limitations from those we are used to today. However, in Ragib's context these were assumptions that were rational for him to hold.[333] Ragib also claimed that his beliefs were rational and that they were the product of the mutual dependency of divine revelation and human reason. For example, he maintained that it is in accordance with reason to say that the fate of the world and its inhabitants is God's secret and should not be investigated.[334] As historians, it is because this belief was "widely accepted as rational and indeed indubitable" in his context that we can think it was rational for him to have held it.[335]

Although Ragib shared the same basic assumptions about a monotheistic creator as the majority of his contemporaries, we have seen in the discussion above that mediaeval intellectual culture in late tenth and early eleventh-century Isfahan was not homogeneous on almost any other theological question. Faced with this plurality of opinion and controversy, Ragib seems to have chosen not to affiliate himself with a powerful group but rather to develop his own

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[332] Ragib, *Analysis of the Two Creations*, 180.

[333] See Skinner, who defines rationality as follows: "When I speak of agents as having rational beliefs, I mean only that their beliefs (what they hold to be true) should be suitable beliefs for them to hold true in the circumstances in which they find themselves". Skinner, *Visions of Politics*, 31, 35.

[334] *al-qadaru sirru –llāhi fa-lā tadḫulū fīhi … wa-l-ʿaqlu lā yankaru an yuḫfā waġhu ḏālika*. Ragib, *On Creeds*, 260.

[335] Skinner, *Visions of Politics*, 36. Skinner is talking about the beliefs of sixteenth-century European peasants in the Bible being the inspired word of God.

idiosyncratic combination of creeds and philosophies. He appears to have been part traditionist, part Sufi, and part philosopher without being fully integrated into any one known group. That said, the contingent nature of the single manuscript discovery that has alone enabled us to be sure that he was alive at that time is a valuable reminder that Ragib himself might not recognise this sketch of himself as an outsider, and would consequently be saddened to learn that the records of his successful professional life and his many scholarly companions had been lost to the vicissitudes of time.

3. RAGIB'S PHILOSOPHY OF LANGUAGE

This chapter starts with an abstraction. I have taken the analyses and comments on language that are scattered across Ragib's works in all genres and assessed his hermeneutical approaches to both divine texts and literature, all in order to produce a six-page synopsis of what I believe to be his philosophy of language. I will provide the textual evidence for the claims in this synopsis in the remainder of this chapter, but for the time being Ragib's philosophy of language and theory of meaning, if they are indeed worthy of the attention I am giving them, must be able to stand on their own as concepts that make sense.

Synopsis

The constellation of assumptions and claims laid out by Ragib at various points across his portfolio of works constitutes a philosophy of language that contains claims, preferences, and attitudes in fields that range from ontology to semantics. It is important to remember that we are not dealing with a field of enquiry that can be easily mapped onto any of our own. As Tony Street observed,

> [w]hereas there is an Arabic term (*manṭiq*) that equates to 'logic', there is no such term or phrase for 'philosophy of language'. As it happens, philosophers tried to solve problems which are now taken to be the concern of a philosophy of language, but this they generally did in the midst of either a logic treatise or a treatise on grammar.[336]

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[336] Street also remarked that "[i]t is a sad fact of modern scholarship that those who study the Greek-derived traditions of philosophy of logic in Arabic are unlikely to have the competence to deal with parallel traditions within the Islamic sciences, and vice versa", a criticism I hope to answer in what follows. Tony Street, "Arabic and Islamic Philosophy of Language and Logic," in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. Edward N. Zalta (http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2008/entries/arabic-islamic-language/Fall 2008 Edition).

Ragib, of course, worked in genres (exegesis, ethics, creed, and literary theory) beyond the logic and grammar mentioned by Street.[337]

Ragib's theory is based around the ontological assumption that the pairing of expression and idea is all that there is, and all that we need, to understand and manipulate the interaction between language, mind, and reality. Expressions are the physical product of the vocal chords, while ideas are an entity that can subsist in our minds, our books, or our speech. The division is between the action by which an idea is vocalized, and the places in which that idea can subsist before, during, and after its vocalization. There is no doubt that Ragib saw the physical act of speech as the primary locus for the insubstantiation of ideas, and therefore also assumed speech to be the primary means of linguistic communication.[338]

Unlike many of the other important binaries of mediaeval hermeneutics and epistemology, expression and idea have an existence outside analytical processes in addition to their uses

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[337] "Philosophy of Language" is a name often given, in the European and American academy today, to theories about language. An instructive example of how it functions in this academy as a disciplinary name, and some of the topics it is taken to include, can be taken from the "Philosophy of Language" section of the *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* entry for the German philosopher Friedrich Daniel Ernst Schleiermacher (1768-1834). Many of the issues on which Schleiermacher is presented as theorizing can be found in this dissertation:

> Schleiermacher nowhere presents his philosophy of language separately; instead, it is found scattered through such works as his lectures on psychology, dialectics, and hermeneutics. The following positions … are especially worth noting: (1) … on the question of the origin of language … (2) Language (and hence thought) are fundamentally social in nature … (3) Language and thought … lend a distinctive character to, all human mental processes. (4) Schleiermacher in his early work postulates an identity of thought with linguistic expression … (5) Schleiermacher adopts a view of meaning which equates it -- not with such items, in principle independent of language, as the referents involved, Platonic forms, or the mentalistic "ideas" favored by the British empiricists and others -- but with word usages, or rules for the use of words. (6) … Schleiermacher argues that thought and conceptualization are not reducible to the occurrence of sensuous images … (7) Human beings exhibit, not only significant linguistic and conceptual-intellectual similarities, but also striking linguistic and conceptual-intellectual diversities, especially between different historical periods and cultures, but even to some extent between individuals within a single period and culture … (8) Schleiermacher, importantly, develops a much more holistic conception of meaning than was yet found in his predecessors … (c) He holds that the distinctive nature of a language's grammatical system (e.g. its system of declensions) is also partly constitutive of the character of the concepts expressed within it …

Michael Forster, "Friedrich Daniel Ernst Schleiermacher," in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. Edward N. Zalta (http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2008/entries/arabic-islamic-language/Fall 2008 Edition).

[338] Cf. the quotation beginning "[i]n a discussion of the nature of writing…" at page 137.

therein. For example, the theory that expressions can have either general (*ʿāmm*) or specific (*ḫāṣṣ*) application (whether "pig" means all pigs or just this pig) is a hermeneutical theory constructed by scholars to assist with deciding whether or not to eat pigs in light of the Quranic text. Just as the conceptual distinction between a root principle (*aṣl*) and its practical application (*farʿ*) was made by scholars in order to help them understand and describe the difference between, for example, the principle that Muslims should follow the Quran and the subsequent applications of its rules to their lives. None of these conceptual distinctions (*ʿāmm*, *ḫāṣṣ*, *aṣl*, *farʿ*) is part of an objective or external reality that applies to both the divine and humanity.

The pairing of expression and idea is part of such a reality. Ragib's assumption is that ideas are objective rather than subjective, accessible to all and amenable to being referred to by expressions. Both expressions and ideas are created by God, for Ragib's monotheistic cosmology has no place for anything else that could be ultimately responsible for them, but as it stands God has ideas just as humans have ideas. The Quran is an example of how he encapsulates his ideas in expressions.

Expression and idea are not just exegetical or hermeneutical tools. For Ragib they are the model by which human communication functions. This is a familiar type of claim: "[m]ost philosophers of language today think that the meaning of an expression is a certain sort of entity, and that the job of semantics is to pair expressions with the entities which are their meanings".[339]

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[339] This quotation, and much of my understanding of what a theory of meaning is, comes from: Speaks, *Theories of Meaning*. When Speaks says "meaning" he is referring to the same "sort of entity" as Ragib when Ragib says *maʿnā*, and his use of "meaning" is therefore analogous to Frank's translation of *maʿnā* as "meaning" (see note 11). In this dissertation I translate *maʿnā* as "idea" because I believe the English word is more flexible, and more appropriate. While, in English, "words" do have "meanings", people are better thought of as sharing "ideas" through language rather than sharing "meanings", and one may be more easily able to think of, for example, the "idea" of God's mercy rather than the "meaning" of his mercy, or of poetic motifs as "ideas" rather than "meanings". The word "meaning" in English is inextricably connected to insubstantiation in language acts, whereas the existence of Ragib's ideas does not depend on their being spoken, written, or heard. Most importantly, however, the word "meaning" in English

To sum up, Ragib's model conceives of language as a series of connections that people make between the ideas in their minds and the sounds on their lips. Now, these connections are either direct references to objects, in which case they substitute for the physical gesture of indication or pointing, or they are polysemic references to ideas. The most common type of polysemy is homonymy, which is caused by the fact that ideas are infinite while expressions are finite. Homonymy is when multiple ideas share a single expression. It is the inevitable consequence of our need to make a finite vocabulary refer to an infinite number of ideas: "the finite cannot encompass the infinite".[340]

In this situation, where language is polysemic whenever it cannot be replaced by a physical act of pointing, people either follow the existing precedents or make new connections between ideas and expressions. Poetry is written through these new connections, and Ragib worked in a society where the linguistic innovation constituted by these unprecedented linkages had great cultural value. Perhaps the primary site of innovation was metaphor, where poets made complex sets of connections between big deep ideas and concise expressions that, thanks to the context provided by the surrounding words and the audience's familiarity with the genre, conveyed those ideas in their totality.

The ideas in question were not just numerically infinite, but they were also each semantically broad. Ideas could have a semantic range that covered a number of subsidiary ideas, so that depending on the identities of speaker and audience the single idea of "mercy" in the adjective "merciful" could apply to a number of very different types of mercy.

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usually refers to the intent behind a speech act and as will be made clear below (page 119f), Ragib deals with intent as a separate category that links expressions to ideas.

[340] *ġayru –l-mutanāhī lā yaḥwīhi –l-mutanāhī*. Ragib, *Methodological Introduction and Exegesis ed. Farḥāt*, 29. —––––, "Methodological Introduction ed. Nāhī," 81.

This combination of infinity and semantic breadth on the level of the ideas with a finite corpus of expressions contained the potential for substantial linguistic ambiguity. Ragib managed that potential ambiguity by a process of circumscription. He assumed that two factors governed, and limited, the interactions between ideas and expressions: the intent of the speaker and the lexicon. By limiting ambiguity these two factors enabled language to function.

People (and God) intend certain ideas when they use certain expressions. They choose the expressions that they use and they know what they mean when they use them. It is the task of the listener to recognize and understand the ideas being referenced.[341] To limit the infinite potential of intent to generate meaning, listeners or readers have recourse to the lexicon, an iteratively produced record of the permissable connections that have been made between ideas and expressions. God made the first connections and taught them to Adam along with the principles for their use and development to which humans continue to adhere.[342]

Listeners also have recourse to the context of the speech act, but Ragib saw context as just one of a number of ways to comprehend intent (a speaker's intent could alternatively be apprehended through the use of the listener's reason).[343] Finally, the listener had recourse to the

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[341] However, it should be remembered that Ragib does not assume that meaning is only generated in conversations. Language happens whenever expressions are combined with ideas, not necessarily just when people are combined with other people. That said, the assumption that language was best analysed in terms of conversations between people, rather than, for example, writing, was very widespread. See: Carter, "Pragmatics and Contractual Language," 36.

[342] These ideas about language are not unfamiliar to twentieth-century philosophy. Saul Kripke has developed a theory in which words have an initial baptism followed by histories of usage for certain purposes. Saul A. Kripke, *Naming and Necessity* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1980; repr., Wiley-Blackwell, 1981). 96, 106f. See also: Speaks, *Theories of Meaning*. Speaks also notes that Kripke's theory would be compatible with mentalist (and mostly Gricean) theories of meaning that rely on intent because "introducing a term involves *intending* that it stand for some object or property" and transmitting a term involves people "*intending* to use it in the same way" (emphasis in original). Such a combination is achieved by Ragib's theory of meaning, which combines an account of names with a reliance on intent.

[343] Ibn Taymīyah's fourteenth-century theory of meaning would, in contrast, put much more stress than Ragib on the context in which a speech act took place. This is what led Ali to make his persuasive comparison of Ibn Taymīyah's

work of scholars such as Ragib, who were engaged in the vast project of explaining how language had been used, how well it had been used, and how it could be used. This project was lexicographical in nature, but it swelled and spread out across the genres of theology and poetics. Ragib was confident that his ethics, piety, and scholarship would ensure that his prescriptions for language, just like his interpretations of sacred prose and profane verse, were correct.

This account of the interaction of expressions and ideas interact is the theory of meaning that lies at the heart of Ragib's philosophy of language.[344] It explains how language is produced as well as how words can be interpreted, and it provides Ragib with the tools to manage ambiguity. The extent of his comfort with linguistic ambiguity, and with the process of negotiating and managing it, is where we can read him as having a philosophy of language built upon that theory of meaning. The theory is a structure that explains and enables polysemy, and the philosophy is the attitude of its author to the linguistic ambiguity it produces.

In a very brief gesture towards the question of whether this conceptual package makes sense, I note two of its qualities that are, to my mind, advantages. They are the autonomy that it grants to language users and its terminological parsimony. The autonomy that the theory of intent gives to language users is substantial. Its impact can be felt both in Ragib's appreciation of

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linguistic thought to Gricean pragmatics. Ali, *Pragmatics*, chapter 4. Ibn Taymīyah's change of tack did not necessarily represent theoretical progress, for recent work on the philosophy of language has demonstrated that the Gricean focus on communicative situations fails to address the problem of audible remarks addressed to oneself, something that does not pose a problem for Ragib's theory. Jeff Speaks, "Conversational Implicature, Thought, and Communication," *Mind & Language* 23, no. 1 (2008).

[344] Ragib engaged with the subject matter of both what are now called semantic theories of meaning, which "assign

[ ] semantic contents to expressions of a language" and foundational theories of meaning, which look for the reasons behind those assignments. See: ———, *Theories of Meaning*. In Ragib's work these two genres of enquiry correspond to the relationship between expression and idea, which is a semantic theory of meaning, and to the issues of communicative intent (*murād, qaṣd*), the lexicon (*al-luġah*), and God's coinage of languages (*al-waḍʿ: tawqīf; iṣṭilāḥ*), which are all components of a foundational theory of meaning.

how poetry freely creates new metaphors, and in the fact that he felt free to develop his own exegetical positions when it came to matters of religion.

The aesthetic and practical impact of having just two terms to cover every hermeneutical and communicative situation is also substantial.[345] We have a complete, self-sufficient, and terminologically indigenous account of language and its use without recourse to the neologisms and proliferation of levels that would characterize twentieth-century linguistics (there are no Carnapian intensions, Russellian propositions, or Fregean senses).[346] This degree of economy makes Ragib's theory intriguingly attractive from the perspective of the program of linguistic minimalism.[347]

Finally, the question of how conscious Ragib was of the theory I have laid out here should be addressed before we move onto the textual details of his thinking. Ragib self-consciously put

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[345] In Boeckx, the value of the minimalist program is to a substantial extent bound up in its aesthetic impact ("beautiful theories"). Boeckx, *Linguistic Minimalism*, 116-123.

[346] Rudolf Carnap (1891–1970), Bertrand Arthur William Russell (1872–1970), and Gottlob Frege (1848-1925). See: Speaks, *Theories of Meaning*.

[347] Linguistic minimalism was a response to the proliferation of concepts, such as the intensions, propositions and senses referenced above, that had accrued in late twentieth-century linguistics. It claimed to follow Ockham's razor and it rested on three pillars: economy (i.e. as few components and levels as possible); virtual conceptual necessity (big inevitable facts); and symmetry (of syntactic operations and representations). The program was launched in 1993 in: Chomsky, "A Minimalist Program." The presentation here is from: Boeckx, *Linguistic Minimalism*, 83. And see notes 9f. Ockham's razor (attributed to William of Ockham (d. 1349) but of earlier origin) is the principle that *entia non sunt multiplicanda praeter necessitatem* (in explaining anything no more assumptions should be made than are necessary). It is analogous to the law of parsimony. "Ockham's razor, n.," in *OED Online* (Oxford University Press, September 2011). One of the "big facts" of linguistic minimalism matches the pairing of expression and idea in Ragib's theory of meaning: "[s]entences are pairings of form (sound/signs) and meaning". Ragib might have recognised some other big facts as assumptions that were the concern of the mediaeval Arabic grammatical tradition: "sentences are basic linguistic units"; "sentences are composed of smaller expressions (words and morphemes)"; "[t]hese smaller units are composed into units with hierarchial structure i.e. phrases, larger than words and smaller than sentences"; "expressions that appear in one position can be interpreted in another"; "there's no upper bound on the length of sentences". Hornstein, Nunes, and Grohmann, *Understanding Minimalism*, 7. Ragib certainly assumed that there was no conceptual alternative to the pairing of expression and idea (i.e. it was inevitable), and Ragib's theory of meaning was furthermore symmetrical (homonymy is multiple ideas for one expression and synonymy is multiple expressions for one idea. We will see, in the next chapter, the same basic symmetry in his theory of poetics: brevity is more idea than expression, prolixity is more expression than idea, and equality is equal idea and expression). It is perhaps no more than an irony of history that linguistics in twenty-first century Europe and America has had to work so hard to achieve a level of simplicity that was assumed by Ragib and his contemporaries to be inevitable.

forward a number of epistemological, ethical, political, and hermeneutical theories throughout

his work but he never explicitly addressed the linguistic methodological assumption that lies at

the centre of many of his theories. It seems that he regarded the pairing of expression and idea as

a simple part of the epistemological and linguistic furniture, to be used rather than deconstructed.

He was not alone in this. He was more explicit about the philosophy that stemmed from his

theory of meaning, and he talked about truth, ambiguity, and hermeneutical complexity. His

responses to the questions posed there mark him, and those like him in the Arabic Language

Tradition, out from scholars in the Classical Language Tradition for whom language was a mere

obstacle to logic. The elegant binary of expression and idea may have been a simple accident of

Arabic vocabulary, or an assumption so basic that it was shared by everyone, but the subsequent

choice to become obsessed with language and the negotiation of ambiguity was by no means as

inevitable.

Analysis

Expression and Idea (*lafẓ* and *maʿnā*)

In his *Quranic Glossary*, Ragib wrote that "'language' applies to both the syntactically

structured <u>expressions</u> and to the <u>ideas</u> that lie beneath them".[348] This quotation comes from a

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[348] My emphasis. *fa-l-kalāmu yaqaʿu ʿalā –l-alfāẓi –l-manẓūmati wa-ʿalā –l-maʿānī –llatī taḥtahā maǧmūʿatan*. Ragib, *Quranic Glossary*, 722. Cf. Ibid., 428. "Language" is "the method of human communication, either spoken or written, consisting of the use of words in a structured and conventional way" ("Language *noun*," in *The Oxford Dictionary of English (revised edition)*, ed. Catherine Soanes and Angus Stevenson (Oxford Reference Online: Oxford University Press, 2005).), which is an acceptable rendering of *al-kalām* (an alternative could be "speech"). Abū Fatḥ ʿUṯmān b. Ǧinnī (d. 1002) defined *al-kalām* as "all self-contained expressions that convey an idea" (*amma –l-kalāmu fa-kullu lafẓin mustaqillin bi-nafsihī mufīdin li-maʿnāhu*). Abū Fatḥ ʿUṯmān Ibn Ǧinnī, *al-Ḥaṣāʾiṣ*, ed. Muḥammad ʿAlī an-Naǧǧār, 3 vols. (Cairo: Dār al-Kutub al-Miṣrīyah, 1952-1956). 1:17. More recently, C. H. M. Versteegh translated *kalām* as "language" while relating it to the Greek *λόγος* (in contrast to *λέξις* for *qawl*). C. H. M. Versteegh, *Greek Elements in Arabic Linguistic Thinking* (Leiden: Brill, 1977). 34. And Tamás Iványi wrote that Sībawayh used *kalām* to mean simply "the Arabic language". Tamás Iványi, "Kalām," in *Encyclopedia of Arabic Language and Linguistics Online Edition*, ed. Kees Versteegh, Lutz Edzard, and Rudolf de Jong (Brill Online: Brill,

work that was more than just an exegetical reference. Ragib had taken the opportunity presented

by the writing of a book about the meanings of words to define concepts that he considered

important, irrespective of whether they actually appeared in the Quran. He included terms such

as "accident" *(al-ʿaraḍ)*, as used by theologians and philosophers, and terms that were used in

both literature and exegesis, such as "the non-literal" *(al-maǧāz)*.[349] The quotation at the head of

this paragraph is therefore an account of what language is and not simply an account of what

"language" means when it occurs in the Quran. Language is all expressions so long as they are

placed in linguistic structures, and all the ideas that lie behind them. The only limit on the plane

of expressions is that they be syntactically structured.

There is no limit on the plane of ideas, other than the fact that in order to be shared with

people they must be put into expressions. Ragib reports a popular etymology of *nuṭq* (speech)

that relates it to *niṭāq* (belt, girdle) because "an expression is like a belt that surrounds and

encompasses the idea".[350] The same concept of tying up, or tying down, an idea into an

expression is behind Ragib's hermeneutic definition of the idea as "divulging that which the

expression had encompassed".[351]

The pairing of expression and idea works in two directions. It is both a hermeneutic that

explains the ideas behind words and a theory of meaning that shows how language is created by

speakers. In this case, and unsurprisingly so in a glossary of the Quran, Ragib is thinking

hermeneutically. He equates the idea behind a Quranic verse with the exegesis of that verse: "the

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2009). As for "expression", Ragib himself defined a linguistic "expression" as figuratively derived from the root's lexical meaning "to eject from the mouth" (*al-lafẓu bi-l-kalāmi mustaʿārun min lafẓi –š-šayʾi min –l-fam*). Ragib, *Quranic Glossary*, 743.

[349] ———, *Quranic Glossary*, 211-212, 560.

[350] *wa-qīla ḥaqīqatu –n-nuṭqi –l-lafẓu –llaḏī huwa ka-n-niṭāqi li-l-maʿnā fī-ḍammihī wa-ḥasrihī*. Ibid., 812.

[351] *wa-l-maʿnā iẓhāru mā taḍammanahū –l-lafẓu*. Ibid., 591.

idea [behind an expression] is comparable to the exegesis [of that expression] even though there is a difference betweeen the two".[352] He expands on this comparison in *On Creeds*:

> The 'idea' is that which language intends to communicate and that which inheres in language. Its name is derived from the verb 'to mean' (*ʿanā*). It can also be defined as the intent contained beneath the expression. In this latter case it is derived from an equally likely source: 'the captive' (*al-ʿānī*), which means 'the prisoner' (*al-asīr*).
>
> 'Exegesis' is the revelation of that which was intended by language. It has been said to be derived from 'to unveil' (*as-safr*) with the first two letters swopped around,[353] but exegesis (*al-fasr*) specifically refers to revelation of ideas,[354] which is why the vial of fluid is called *al-fasr* because it informs the doctor [i.e. gives the doctor ideas] about the temperament of the patient who produced it.[355] 'Unveiling' on the other hand specifically refers to the revelation of substances, such as unveiling a mask from the face and a turban from the head.[356]

To paraphrase: ideas are an inevitable and inseparable part of language and one way to conceive of them is as the intent behind a speech act. Exegesis is the process of revealing exactly which

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[352] *wa-l-maʿnā yuqārinu –t-tafsīra wa-in kāna baynahumā farq*. Ibid.

[353] Cf. *as-safru kašfu –l-ġiṭāʾ* ("unveiling is the removal of the cover"). Ibid., 412.

[354] Cf. *al-fasru iẓhāru –l-maʿnā –l-maʿqūl* ("exegesis is the divulgence of the mental idea"). Ibid., 636. Dāwūdī brackets this phrase in the *Quranic Glossary* as having been quoted in az-Zarkašī, *al-Burhān*, 2:148. However, az-Zarkašī is in fact quoting Ragib, *Methodological Introduction and Exegesis ed. Farḥāt*, 47. ———, "Methodological Introduction ed. Nāhī," 91. Dāwūdī's addition is nevertheless correct: ———. *Mufradāt al-Ḫaṭīb Collection*. f.140b.

[355] Cf. *wa-minhu qīla li-mā yunbiʾu ʿanhu –l-bawlu tafsiratun wa-summiya bi-hā qārūratu –l-māʾ* ("that which is communicated by urine *(tafsirah)* is derived from *al-fasr* and for this reason the water vessel is called *al-fasr*"). ———, *Quranic Glossary*, 636.

[356] *al-maʿnā huwa –l-maqṣūdu ilayhi min –l-kalāmi –l-mubahhamu bihī min qawlihim ʿanā fulānun bi-kaḏā wa-qīla huwa –l-muḥtawī taḥta –l-lafẓi min –l-maqṣūdi ilayhi min qawlihim –l-ʿānī li-l-asīri wa-š-štiqāqāni yataqāribāni wa-t-tafsīru huwa –l-kašfu ʿan –l-maqṣūdi ilayhi bi-l-kalāmi wa-qīla –t-tafsīru maqlūbun ʿan –s-safri lākinna –t-tafsīra muḫtaṣṣun bi-kašfi –l-maʿnā wa-li-hāḏā qīla li-qārūrati –l-māʾi fasrun min ḥaytu annahū yunbiʾu ʿan mazāġi ṣāḥibihī li-ṭ-ṭabībī wa-s-safru yaḥtaṣṣu bi-kašfi –l-aʿyāni ka-safri –l-qināʿi ʿan –l-waǧhi wa-l-ʿimāmati ʿan –r-raʾs.* ———, *On Creeds*, 178. Al-ʿAğalī claims to follow *Āstān-e Quds-e Reżāvī 56* when he gives *qāḏifu –l-māʾi* for *qārūratu –l-māʾi*, but the text there could only possibly be read as an inexplicable *qāriʾatu –l-māʾi*, and is best read as *qārūratu –l-māʾi* in accordance with the other three mss.: ———. *Āstān-e Quds-e Rażāvī 56*. f.12a; ———. *Sehid Ali 382*. f.36b; ———. *Chester Beatty AR 5277*. f.50b; ———. *Feyzullah Efendi 2141*. f.61a.

ideas were intended by the expressions in question.[357] Ragib's argument in this quotation relies heavily on etymologies, and this is symptomatic of his tendency to rely on the lexicon, which is of course where the etymologies are recorded and stored. Furthermore, in this passage and throughout his works Ragib is not only using the lexicon, he is creating and refining it. In the centuries after his death, he would become a lexical authority himself.

This quotation from *On Creeds* also reinforces the image of ideas being restricted by expressions. The infinite potential scope of ideas and intentions is held captive by a finite number of expressions, and language consequently has no option but to allow both homonymy and the potential for ambiguity that accompanies it:

> With regard to expressions, our principle is that they vary according to variations in the ideas. However, this is impossible, for the ideas are infinite while the expressions, despite the variations in their combinations, are finite. The infinite cannot be encompassed by the finite. Homonymy is therefore inevitable.[358]

In this quotation Ragib raises the possibility of a theory of meaning that would be essentialist, in which each expression would refer to a single idea. He describes this possibility as a principle (*aṣl*), but a principle which must perforce be abandoned in the face of complex reality. There are

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[357] John Wansborough described how the word "idea" could be used to mean periphrastic exegesis, just as Ragib does here: ("the idea of this verse is: [paraphrase of text]"). John Wansborough, "*Majāz al-qur'ān*: Periphrastic Exegesis," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 33, no. 2 (1970): 254 n.6, 256. Cf. Ella Almagor, "The Early Meaning of Majāz and the Nature of Abū ʿUbaydah's Exegesis," in *Ḥikre mizraḥ: le-zekher Dayid Tsevi Benʿet / Studia Orientalia: memoriae D. H. Baneth dedicata*, ed. Joshua Blau, Meir Jacob Kister, Shlomo Pines, and Shaul Shaked (Jerusalem: Hebrew University, Y. L. Magnes, 1979), 316. As we shall see below (note 417), for Ragib *maǧāz* meant any deviation at all from the lexicon and its standard literal use (*aṣl al-luġah*), whether a slight morphological variant in a dialect, an ellipsis, a pleonasm, or a complex metaphor. See also: Key, "Language and Literature," 52-53.

[358] *wa-l-aṣlu fī-l-alfāẓi an takūna muḫtaliftan bi-ḥasabi -ḫtilāfi –l-maʿānī lākinna ḏālika lam yakun fī –l-imkāni iḏ kānat –l-maʿānī bi-lā nihāyata wa-l-alfāẓu maʿa -ḫtilāfi tarākībihā ḏāta nihāyatin wa-ġayru –l-mutanāhī lā yaḥwīhi –l-mutanāhī fa-lam yakun buddan min wuqūʿi –štirākin fī-l-alfāẓ*. Ragib, *Methodological Introduction and Exegesis ed. Farḥāt*, 29. ———, "Methodological Introduction ed. Nāhī," 80-81. Cf. as-Suyūṭī, *al-Muzhir*, 1:369.

just too many ideas out there for such a simple model of language to work, and expressions have to do the work of conveying multiple ideas.

Not only are there an infinite number of ideas accessible to those who use language, but these ideas themselves are also far from simple. Many of them have a broad semantic range. For example, Ragib's exegesis of the word "merciful" in the *basmalah* [359] explains that "mercy" has a range of meaning, from the human feeling of delicacy *(ar-riqqah)* to the divine actions of favour and grace *(al-ʿaṭf wa-t-tafaḍḍul)*. The same principle applies to "compassionate" *(ar-raʾūf)* and "generosity" *(al-ǧūd)*. Ragib explains:

> This exegesis, I mean that of 'generosity', is according to the precedent set by the generation that came after the Prophet Muḥammad when they said 'God's generosity is blessing and favour while human generosity is delicacy and sympathy'.[360] It is more obvious, a clearer methodology, and closer to the view of our forefathers than that of those who blindly grope around in their exegesis of this subject, claiming that the ideas behind a description do not change when the thing described changes. Those who make this claim fail to conceive that it is possible for there to be a substantial gap between the beginning and the end of an idea.[361]

This is an unambiguous argument against an essentialist theory of descriptions; the claim that a descriptive expression refers to an unchanging essence is a fumble of the exegetical process.

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[359] The Quranic invocation that introduces all (except the ninth) of its suras: *bi-smi –llāhi –r-raḥmāni –r-raḥīm* ("in the name of God, the merciful the beneficient").

[360] I have not yet found this exegetical statement quoted by Ragib anywhere outside his own works.

[361] *wa-hāḏā –t-tafsīru aʿnī fī-r-raḥmati huwa ʿalā mā ruwiya ʿan –t-tābiʿīna ḥayṯu qālū –r-raḥmatu min –llāhi inʿāmun wa-ifḍālun wa-min –l-ādamīyīna riqqatun wa-taʿaṭṭufun wa-hāḏā -ṭ-ṭarīqatu aẓharu wa-abyanu wa-ašbahu bi-naẓari –s-salafi min naẓari man taḥabbaṭa fī tafsīri ḏālika zāʿiman anna –l-waṣfa lā taḥtalifu maʿānīhi bi-ḥtilāfi –l-mawṣūfīna wa-ḏālika anna qāʾila ḏālika lam yataṣawwar annahū qad yakūnu bayna mabdaʾi –l-maʿnā wa-muntahāhu bawnun baʿīd.* Ragib, *Methodological Introduction and Exegesis ed. Farḥāt*, 115. Cf. ———, *On Creeds*, 270; ———, *Quranic Glossary*, 347.

Ideas are so semantically broad that expressions can refer to different parts of them, depending on what the expression in question is describing.[362]

Why is this so important? The answer is that greater issues are at stake than mere linguistic structure. Ragib's analysis is designed to combat the potential that language has to imply that divine and human qualities are the same. From the perspective of his beliefs it simply cannot be that the expression "generous" refers to exactly the same idea of generosity no matter whether it is used to describe God or to describe a shopkeeper. There has to be a hierarchy of meanings for descriptive words such as generosity, mercy, and compassion in order to differentiate between divine and human qualities.

If Ragib's theological convictions can guide him towards rejecting an essentialist theory of descriptions in the above exegetical situation, what happens to this position when questions of theological importance are not at stake? This is where Ragib's manual of poetics becomes an important part of the process of understanding his assumptions about language. He writes in the section titled "the structure of language":

> There are two types of language, that which is used and that which is not used.[363] There is no need to discuss the latter. Language that is used can also be sub-divided into two types. There is language that enables us to make a distinction between two specific things and by doing so replace a physical gesture. This is the proper name. There is also language that exists in order to communicate through polysemy. This second type is then sub-divided again into two parts. One part applies to different things and opposites, such as the nouns

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[362] In the *Quranic Glossary* Ragib explains it thus: *fa-maʿnāhu –l-mawǧudu fī-n-nāsi min –l-maʿnā –l-mawǧudu li-llāhi taʿālā* ("the idea of mercy that is present in humans is part of the idea of mercy that is applied to God"). ———, *Quranic Glossary*, 347.

[363] Alternatively "operative" and "inoperative", see: Sophia Vasalou, "Subject and Body in Baṣran Muʿtazilism, or: Muʿtazilite Kalām and the Fear of Triviality " *Arabic Sciences and Philosophy* 17(2007): 205 note 9. As-Suyūṭī uses Ibn Fāris (Abū al-Ḥusayn Aḥmad, d. 395/1004) to define inoperative language: it is either impermissable combinations of letters in a root, for example putting ʿayn next to ġayn, or it is a permissable combination of letters that is not found in the lexicon (or is not used by the Bedouin) such as ʿ-ḍ-ḥ. as-Suyūṭī, *al-Muzhir*, 1:240.

'colour' and 'substance' and the verbs 'to do' and 'to make'. The second part pertains to specifics, such as the nouns 'horse' and 'donkey' and the verbs 'to go out' and 'to hit'.[364]

There are different types of communicative expressions. There are those that are used for one specific idea, those that are used for two different ideas, and those that are used for two opposite ideas. There is no disagreement about the first type. With regard to the second and third types, there is no disagreement that this can happen in two different dialects,[365] but there is disagreement about whether it can happen within a single dialect. Those who deny that it can happen in a single dialect require that every such expression has two aspects. Furthermore, people disagree about whether a single expression can refer to two different ideas. Many of the litterateurs and jurists deny that it can, some of them allow it, and the latter group are correct. An example of this is the line:

Water, its supply tainted, deserted. The wild beasts dig at its edges.[366]

 'Water' can be applied to the place in which water is, and in this line both the water itself, and the place in which it is, can be what is intended by 'water'. This is because 'tainted' is an attribute of water, 'deserted' is an attribute of place, and both can be attributed to 'water'.[367]

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[364] Colour, for example, can refer to the opposites of black and white. "To hit" is a potential homonym because it can apply to both "I hit Zayd" (*ḍarabtu zaydan*) and "I coined an analogy" (*ḍarabtu maṯalan*). In each case it is used to convey a specific idea (*yatanāwalu maḥṣūṣan*). These examples come from a lost work by al-Mubarrad (Abū al-ʿAbbās Muḥammad, d. 900), *Kitāb Mā Ittafaqa Lafẓuhū wa-Ḫtalafa Maʿnāhu* (The Book of Homonyms). ———, *al-Muzhir*, 1:388.

[365] As in, for example, the anecdote that tells how a man mistook a Yemeni king's command to sit (*ṯib* in Ḥimyaritic according to Ibn Fāris and as-Suyūṭī) for a command to jump (*ṯib*) and subsequently leapt obediently to his death from the hill they were standing atop. For Ragib, Ibn Fāris, and as-Suyūṭī, Ḥimyaritic was a *luġah* just like other dialects, although we might call it a language. Abū al-Ḥusayn Aḥmad al-Qazwīnī Ibn Fāris, *aṣ-Ṣāḥibī fī Fiqh al-Luġah wa-Sunan al-ʿArab fī-Kalāmihā* (Cairo: al-Maktabah as-Salafīyah, 1910). 22; as-Suyūṭī, *al-Muzhir*, 1:256-257, 1:381, 1:396.

[366] *al-wāfir*. Rabīʿah b. Makrūm (d. ca. 672). A marginal annotation is recorded in the ms. at f.4a: "Marginal note. Digging *(al-iʿtiqām)* means excavating *(al-iḥtiqār)* at the side of a well. It is also said to mean hesitation, and this is more correct". Ragib. *Innovative Figures of Speech*. ff.3b-4a. A more literal translation would follow Edward Lane: "Many a water, or and a water, of which the supplies are altered for the worse, and which is deserted, by the sides of which the beasts of prey dig hollows in the ground, app. to obtain water that has become purified by filtration … or, as some say, the meaning is … *taraddadu* i.e. *go to and fro*". Edward William Lane, *Arabic-English Lexicon*, 8 vols. (London: Williams & Norgate, 1863-1893). ʿ-q-m.

[367] The Arabic text is provided in Appendix Two. Ragib. *Innovative Figures of Speech*. ff.3b-4a. Ragib makes

Ragib divides language into two. The first type of language replaces a physical gesture of indication, and an essentialist theory of descriptions applies. The second type of language "exists in order to communicate through polysemy" (*ḍarbun wuḍiʿa li-yufīda ʿalā ṭarīqi –l-ištirāk*). Therefore, every expression for which a physical gesture cannot be substituted refers to ideas through polysemy.[368]

Ragib's claim that language is either an act of naming or a negotiation of polysemy can be brought into focus by a comparison with the discussion between Wittgenstein, whose work on language I have found useful for thinking about Ragib's, and St Augustine of Hippo (d. 430). Augustine wrote that language is acquired by gradual memorisation of the names of things:

> When they (my elders) named some object, and accordingly moved towards something, I saw this and I grasped that the thing was called by the sound they uttered when they meant to point it out … as I heard words repeatedly used in their proper places in various sentences, I gradually learnt to understand what objects they signified; and after I had trained my mouth to form these signs, I used them to express my own desires.[369]

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exactly the same point in the methodological introduction to his *Exegesis:*
> Water, its supply tainted, deserted. The poet mentions the water, and intends the water, and also the place of the water, for the place in which water is in can be called 'water'. The indication that the poet intended both of them is that he described it as 'its supply tainted', which is an attribute of water, and as 'deserted', which is an attribute of place. (*wa-māʾin āǧinin –l-ǧammāti qafrin fa-ḏakara –l-māʾa wa-arādahū bihī wa-makānahū fa-qad yusammā makāna –l-māʾi māʾan wa-d-dalālatu ʿalā annahū arādahumā annahū qad waṣafahū bi-āǧini –l-ǧammāti wa-ḏālika min ṣifati –l-māʾi wa-bi-qafrin wa-huwa min ṣifati –l-makān*).

———, "Methodological Introduction ed. Nāhī," 124; ———, *Methodological Introduction and Exegesis ed. Farḥāt*, 99.

[368] *al-ištirāk* is polysemy whereas *ištirāk al-lafẓ* (for example note 358) is homonymy. Ragib understands polysemy as being broader (inclusive of names of genera) than homonymy (not inclusive of names of genera). His list of expressions that appear to be homonymous but can actually be explained as, for example, names of species, is at: ———, "Methodological Introduction ed. Nāhī," 82; ———, *Methodological Introduction and Exegesis ed. Farḥāt*, 31-32.

[369] Augustine *Confessions* I.8 quoted and translated in Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, #1. It should be noted that Wittgenstein is making polemical use of Augustine's work here, and is consequently unconcerned with the question of whether his quotations are an accurate presentation of Augustine's positions.

This is very similar to the first type of language described by Ragib: "a distinction between two specific things … [that] replace[s] a physical gesture". Wittgenstein wanted to break down Augustine's assumption that language is acts of naming and replace it with a focus on how people use language: "*Die Bedeutung eines Wortes ist sein Gebrauch in der Sprache*".[370] The European tradition recognises this as an important step forward, one that would influence the development of theories of speech-acts and pragmatics by, among others, John L. Austin (1911–1960) and John R. Searle (1932–). Like Wittgenstein, Ragib assumed that words were inherently ambiguous and that the way to identify their meaning was through knowledge of the speaker's intent. The difference between them is that, as noted above,[371] Wittgenstein rejected theories of meaning like Ragib's, which were built around the two-part linguistic structure of expression and idea. This means that while the two men share the assumption of linguistic ambiguity, only Ragib held that this ambiguity operates through polysemy.[372]

In the quotation on "the structure of language" above, Ragib explains what he means by polysemy.[373] The first sort of polysemy is the ambiguity that results from the names of qualities and generic verbs. On this reading, "I do" is a homonym because the "doing" can refer to any number of actions, and "colour" can refer to opposites such as black and white. The second sort of polysemy is the ambiguity that results from the names of species and more specific verbs, and

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[370] "[T]he meaning of a word is its use in the language". Ibid., #43.

[371] See note 38.

[372] My alibi for this flight of comparative fancy is Rorty, who writes: "[w]e need to imagine Aristotle studying Galileo or Quine and changing his mind, Aquinas reading Newton or Hume and changing his…" "[R]econstructions are necessary to help us present-day philosophers think through our problems". Rorty, "The Historiography of Philosophy," 51, 54, 68.

[373] Page 114.

it is what Ragib elsewhere calls "expressions in concert" (*al-lafẓ al-mutawāṭiʾ*) with the example

of the expression "human being" referring to two different people (Zayd and ʿAmr, of course).[374]

In all of these cases, when expressions are used they are either intended to refer to a single

idea, in which case they are uncontroversial, or they are intended to refer to two different things,

or even two opposites. Ragib sides with what he implies is a minority position ("many deny …

some allow") that permits a single expression to mean two different things at the same time. In

the methodological introduction to his *Exegesis* he sharpens this to mean that a single expression

in the Quran can only refer to different ideas when those ideas can be read as different aspects of

a single general idea.[375] Indeed, in the quotation on "the structure of language" above the

example given is one where the different ideas behind "water" are closely related.[376]

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[374] Ragib, "Methodological Introduction ed. Nāhī," 81; ———, *Methodological Introduction and Exegesis ed. Farḥāt*, 29. The term *al-mutawāṭiʾ* comes from the Classical Language Tradition, where it sits in a three-part division that originated in Aristotle's *Categories*. Things either share a name in the way that a man and a picture share the name "animal" (*al-muttafiqah asmāʾuhā*), share a name in the way that a man and an ox share the name "animal" (*al-mutawāṭiʾah asmāʾuhā*), or their names are derived in the way that a "brave" man is called "brave" from "bravery" (*al-muštaqqah asmāʾuhā*). Aristotle, "Categories," 1a; ———, *Organon Aristotelis*, 1:1. Cf. Aristotle and Ackrill, *Categories*, 71-73; Abū ʿAlī al-Ḥusayn Avicenna (Ibn Sīnā), "aš-Šifāʾ: al-Manṭiq II (al-Maqūlāt)," in *aš-Šifāʾ*, ed. Ibrāhīm Madkūr (Cairo: Wizārat aṯ-Ṯaqāfah wa-l-Iršād al-Qawmī, 1959; reprint, Qum: Ẕovī el-Qurbā, 2007), 9f; Abū Muḥammad ʿAlī b. Aḥmad Ibn Ḥazm, *at-Taqrīb li-Ḥadd al-Manṭiq wa-l-Madḫal ilayhi bi-l-Alfāẓ al-ʿĀmīyah wa-l-Amṯilah al-Fiqhīyah wa-yalīhi Miḥakk an-Naẓr fī-l-Manṭiq taʾlīf Abī Ḥāmid Muḥammad al-Ġazālī*, ed. Aḥmad Farīd al-Mazīdī (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmīyah, 2003). 39-40; Zimmermann, *Commentary and Short Treatise*, xxv (note 2).

[375] Ragib, "Methodological Introduction ed. Nāhī," 123-125; ———, *Methodological Introduction and Exegesis ed. Farḥāt*, 98-101. See also the paraphrase and discussion of this section below at note 422.

[376] In a further example, Ragib writes in his *Exegesis* that "that which has been recited to you" (*mā yutlā ʿalaykum*) in Quran 4:127 can be understood as meaning, by a process of suppletive insertion (*taqdīr*), both "that which has been recited to you will be made clear to you" (*mā yutlā ʿalaykum bayyana la-kum*) and "God states to you that which has been recited to you" (*yuftīkum allāhu mā yutlā ʿalaykum*). Ragib explains that this expression can mean two things at the same time according to the exegetical principle he laid out in his methodological introduction to the *Exegesis*: that a verb can have two different agents when it is considered in two different ways (*wa-qad taqaddama fī ṣadri l-kitābi anna fiʿlan wāḥidan yaṣiḥḥu an yunsaba ilā fāʿilayni bi-ʿtibārātin muḫtalifah*). ———, *Exegesis ed. Sardār*, 178; ———, "Methodological Introduction ed. Nāhī," 101-104; ———, *Methodological Introduction and Exegesis ed. Farḥāt*, 63-67.

Intent (*murād, qaṣd*)[377]

The tension at the heart of the relationship between expression and idea is that Ragib believes that language is ambiguous, but he also believes that it is comprehensible. His theory of meaning necessitates the assumption that polysemy is everywhere, and the consequent uncertainty about which expression refers to what idea can only lead to ambiguity. But Ragib does not appear to be overly concerned about whether this ambiguity can be managed. He assumes that intent links expression and idea,[378] and that this intent can be known. If the speaker has sufficient ability, then the intent will be known: the audience fails to understand only when speakers either can't properly conceive what they want to say, or can't express their conception. It scarcely needs adding that this failure to talk properly never happens with God.[379]

When God says something, he means something by it. His intent can be misconstrued by his audience, in which case he can clarify what he meant. For this principle Ragib gives an example from the early days of Islam, when God was in conversation with the detractors of the new religion through his prophet and Quran. God asked the rhetorical question "who will make a

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[377] And occasionally (and potentially confusingly), the verb *yaʿnī* and the noun *maʿnā*. See, for example: *wa-qīla maʿnā qawlihī yuʾminūna bi-l-ġaybi yaʿnī bi-l-qalbi wa-n-nūri –lladī ātāhum allāhu wa-huwa –l-ʿaql*. ("It is said that the idea behind [or "the meaning of"] 'they believe in that which is hidden' [Quran 2:3] means 'they believe in the heart and the light that God gave them', and this is the reason") . [My emphasis]. ———, *Methodological Introduction and Exegesis ed. Farḥāt*, 156.

[378] This is what Speaks would call a "mentalist" theory of meaning, one that "aim[s] to explain the nature of meaning in terms of the mental states of language users". Speaks, *Theories of Meaning*. See Ragib as quoted above (note 356): *al-maʿnā huwa al-maqṣūdu min –l-kalām*. Ragib, *On Creeds*, 178. The fact that Ragib continues "it can also be defined as the intent contained beneath the expression" disproves Kouloughli's assertion (repeated by Versteegh) that when *maʿnā* is intent it is not a correlate of *lafẓ*. Kouloughli, "A propos de *lafẓ* et *maʾnā*," 44. Versteegh, "The Arabic Tradition," 229-230.

[379] Paraphrase of: *faṣlun fī –l-āfāti –l-māniʿati min fahmi –l-muḫāṭabi murāda –l-muḫāṭib. al-āfātu –l-māniʿati min dālika talātatun ... wa-t-tānīyatu rāġiʿatun ilā –l-muḫāṭibi wa-dālika li-ḍaʿfi taṣawwurihī li-mā qaṣada –l-inbāʾa ʿanhu aw quṣūri ʿibāratihī ʿan taṣawwuri mā qaṣada –l-inbāʾa ʿanhu wa-ḫiṭābu –llāhi ʿazza wa-ġalla munazzahun ʿanhā*. Ragib, "Methodological Introduction ed. Nāhī," 86; ———, *Methodological Introduction and Exegesis ed. Farḥāt*, 39.

good loan to God that God may return it to him doubled?"[380] This was gleefully misunderstood by Muhammad's opponents to mean that his God was in need of their money. God subsequently said "we have heard those who say that 'God is poor and we are rich', and we will record what they say together with their unlawful killing of previous prophets, and we will say 'taste the painful torment!'"[381] Ragib explains that they had not really thought that God was poor, and God was therefore not correcting a miscomprehension, but rather they had construed God's speech "against its intended force" and God was correcting their insincere failure to understand what he meant.[382] Ragib appears to be sensitive to the implication that God's speech could be unclear, and he is keen to shift the blame to the wilful audience.

In the methodological introduction to his *Exegesis* it again appears that Ragib does not think misapprehensions of intent are a major problem for communication. While he states that communication functions when the audience comprehends the speaker's intent,[383] in his lengthy enumeration of ways in which language can get in the way of understanding he only obliquely refers to intent as a potential problem. He writes that the difference in illocutionary force between "do!" being a demand, plea, or command is a supplementary factor to the expression and it can be solved with reference to the context in which the words were spoken.[384]

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[380] Quran 2:245 and Quran 57:11 (al-Ḥadīd).

[381] Quran 3:181.

[382] *wa-innamā ʿayyarahum taġāhulahumm wa-takḏībahum wa-ṣarfahum –l-kalāma ilā ġayri –l-waǧhi –l-maqṣūdi bihī* ("rather he condemned them for their feigned ignorance, their slander, and their construing of [God's] speech against its intended force"). Ragib, *Exegesis ed. aš-Šidī*, 1014.

[383] ———, "Methodological Introduction ed. Nāhī," 86; ———, *Methodological Introduction and Exegesis ed. Farḥāt*, 39. See note 379. There can of course be confusion, and exegetical discussion, about the intended audience for a particular Quranic address, for example whether the "you" in Quran 4:79 "that which affects you" (*wa-mā aṣābaka*) refers to all humans or just to the Prophet. ———, *Exegesis ed. aš-Šidī*, 1340f.

[384] [*wa-lafẓun ġāmiḍun*] *wa-immā min ǧihati –l-iḍāfati wa-ḏālika bi-ḥasabi -ʿtibāri ḥāli –l-muḫāṭibi naḥwi qawluka –fʿal fī -ṭ-ṭalabi wa-š-šifāʿati wa-l-amr*. ———, "Methodological Introduction ed. Nāhī," 86; ———,

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Ragib also deals with deliberate misinterpretation of God's speech in his discussion of Quran 4:46 in the *Quranic Glossary*. He explains that the phrase "they twist the words out of their place" (*yuḥarrifūna –l-kalima ʿan mawḍūʿihī*) can be read as referring to the expressions or to the ideas. If it refers to the expressions, then it means that the Prophet's Jewish opponents were swopping and changing the words of the Quran. If it refers to the ideas, then they were "interpreting God's speech in a way that was contradictory to what God intended and required".[385] Ragib prefers the second reading because "if expressions circulate in common currency it is hard to swop them";[386] although it is possible for divine intent to be deliberately misinterpreted, the the lexicon provides checks and balance.

The Lexicon

The lexicon is a store of semantic connections that guides how words can be used. Ragib used the pairing of expression and idea to create a theory of meaning that guaranteed some words would have multiple meanings, but he did not solve all of the resultant ambiguity with pragmatics. Although he assumes that speakers' intentions determine the ideas to which their expressions refer, unlike Ibn Taymīyah in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries and Grice in the twentieth, Ragib does not always explain ambiguous language by working out what the speaker meant. Perhaps Ragib felt that it would be too rootless an exegetical strategy, or perhaps he simply assumed that the tradition in which he worked was the right one. There was certainly a tremendous amount of cultural weight behind the lexicographical project of the Arabic Language Tradition, which had for several centuries by Ragib's time been producing a record of the

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Methodological Introduction and Exegesis ed. Farḥāt, 38.

[385] *innahū kāna min ǧihati –l-maʿnā wa-huwa ḥamluhū ʿalā ġayri mā qaṣada bihī wa-qtaḍāhu.* ———, *Quranic Glossary*, 725.

[386] *wa-hāḏā amṯalu –l-qawlayni fa-inna –l-lafẓa iḏā tadāwalathu –l-alsinatu wa-štahara yaʿṣubu tabdīluhū.* Ibid.

legitimate connections that had been made, and therefore could be made, between expressions and ideas.[387]

Ragib solves the problem of polysemy with precedent rather than pragmatics. For any homonymous expression, the lexicon will contain a list of potential ideas to which it may refer. An ambiguous phrase can usually be split into its constituent expressions, or it can be related to a phrase someone else has used previously. The lexicon in the form of dictionaries is a source of both these precedents and their legitimacy; if a usage is in the lexicon then it has been approved. The lexicon is also more than just dictionaries and it can in some cases encompass whole genres of literature or the entire opera of famous authors. When Ragib comes to explain a complex image in a recent line of poetry, he can look back across centuries of poems that everyone knows for precedents that could explain the new image's constituent parts. The lexicon is therefore in everyone's heads as well as in the dictionaries on their shelves. Finally, the lexicon is a work in progress. Ragib did not only refer to it, he created it.[388] Subsequent generations of scholars would refer to his *Quranic Glossary* as a reliable indication of what someone could be said to have said.

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[387] It was helped by the fact that Arabic's broadly trilateral root structure, which it shares with other Semitic languages, facilitates the process of linking words to other words. Petr Zemánek, "Root," in *Encyclopedia of Arabic Language and Linguistics Online Edition*, ed. Kees Versteegh, Lutz Edzard, and Rudolf de Jong (Brill Online: Brill, 2010). Mohssen Esseesy, "Semantic Extension," in *Encyclopedia of Arabic Language and Linguistics Online Edition*, ed. Kees Versteegh, Lutz Edzard, and Rudolf de Jong (Brill Online: Brill, 2010). Dictionaries such as that of Ibn Fāris would make the explicit argument that all word meanings derived from a limited number of roots. Abū al-Ḥusayn Aḥmad al-Qazwīnī Ibn Fāris, *Muʿğam Maqāyīs al-Luġah*, ed. ʿAbd as-Salām Muḥammad Hārūn (Cairo: ʿĪsā al-Bābī al-Ḥalabī, 1946-1952).

[388] For example, in his *Exegesis* Ragib engages with and corrects his lexicographical predecessors: *kāfir*, which in the lexicon (*fī-l-luġah*) means the act of covering is not enshrined in the lexicon as a name for the night (because it covers people in darkness) or the sower (because he covers the ground with seeds) "as some lexicographers have thought" but rather "it is a description taking the syntactic role of the thing described" (*fa-innna ḏālika ʿalā iqāmati al-waṣfi maqāma –l-mawṣūf*). Little is at stake here except the lexicographical nicety that the relationship of *kāfir* to *layl* is *mağāz* (deviation from the lexicon's fiat coinage) rather than *ḥaqīqah* (adherence to the lexicon's fiat coinage). See below for the discussion of these two terms. Ragib. *Carullah 84*. ff.14b-15a.

Where did the lexicon come from? This was a well-established point of theological discussion to which Ragib gives his answer in exegesis of the verse that says "God taught Adam all the names".[389] The quotation below runs to several pages, but it deserves to be reproduced in full (and edited in Arabic in the Appendices) because Ragib clearly felt he was discussing the essence of language rather than, as elsewhere, giving hermeneutical or poetic strategies for working with language. He also makes a number of interesting epistemological claims along the way:

> One can scarcely explain Quran 2:31 without dealing with the question of how God taught the names to Adam, and whether there is an indication therein that languages were created by fiat, or that the first languages were created by convention. Furthermore, did God teach Adam the names without the ideas behind them, or did he teach the names and their ideas together? … We say (although the final arbitration is God's) that people disagree about languages. Some theologians think that the first languages were created by convention and the remainder of languages were then created by fiat. They deduce this from the fact that God's intent can only be known through his speech and it cannot just be necessarily evident because knowledge of God's intent is subsidiary to knowledge of God's essence, and knowledge of God's essence is not necessarily evident, it is acquired. It is not possible for God's intent to be necessarily evident while knowledge of his essence has to be acquired

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[389] Quran 2:31. Adam's role in the origin of language is not unique to the Islamic tradition. While the God of the Quran is explicitly a teacher, in the Bible (Genesis 2:19-20) God creates and then it is Adam that does the naming. Just as scholars like Ragib in the eleventh century and earlier had engaged with the origin of language as reported in the Quran, so philosophers like Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz (1646-1716) and John Locke (1632-1704) worked on explanations of the Biblical account. Both men took the position that Adam worked out the names on the basis of onomatopoeia. Both chose, like Ragib, to use Adam to talk about the origin of language. The account in Plato's *Cratylus*, where Socrates posits a "namegiver" in order to discuss the origin of names (and ultimately knowledge), appears to have been a less satisfying starting point (it was certainly available to Leibniz and Locke, whereas it might not have been to Ragib). For Leibniz and Locke see: Roy Harris and Talbot J. Taylor, *Landmarks in Linguistic Thought I: the Western tradition from Socrates to Saussure* (London: Routledge, 1997). 36-38. For a discussion of Adam's role see: Michael Carter, "Adam and the Technical Terms of Islam," in *Words, texts, and concepts cruising the Mediterranean Sea: studies on the sources, contents and influences of Islamic civilization and Arabic philosophy and science: dedicated to Gerhard Endress on his sixty-fifth birthday*, ed. Gerhard Endress, Rüdiger Arnzen, and Jörn Thielmann, *Orientalia Lovaniensia analecta* (Peeters, 2004). For a review of Arabic positions, see: Henri Loucel, "L'origine du langage d'après les grammariens arabes: I-IV," *Arabica* 10-11, no. 2-3, 1-2 (1963-1964).

because this would mean that hidden knowledge was necessarily evident while clear knowledge had to be acquired. Their argument is unsound, but it is what they said.[390]

The correct position, God willing, is that to which the great mass of people adhere: that language was created by fiat. Before we provide the evidence for this we will clarify that, however God may have taught his servants, discussion and resolution of this question is facilitated by the fact that God referred to the matter when he said: 'God only speaks to humans through revelation, or from behind a veil, or he sends a messenger to whose ear he reveals what he will'.[391]

The Quran therefore says that God speaks to humans in one of these three ways. The most noble is the dispatch of a messenger who both sees God and hears his speech as the Prophet did when he was with Gabriel (ṣ). The second way is when God casts speech into hearing without sight as happened to Moses (ṣ) at the beginning of his mission. The third is when God reveals, and 'revelation' here specifically refers to God's casting into the soul, and his acts of inspiration, command, and dream. God must have taught Adam the names in one of these three ways (dispatch of messenger, hearing without sight, revelation).

To return to the evidence for creation by fiat, it is impossible for expressions to have developed through convention before God taught Adam because convention requires the existence of speech that people are already using together. Such a position would lead to there being neither convention nor any language!

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[390] This is the Muʿtazilī position espoused by al-Qāḍī ʿAbd al-Ǧabbār: God is someone whose intent cannot be known as a matter of necessity because his intent is a subsidiary of his essence, which would itself then have to be known as a matter of necessity. God's essence cannot be known as a matter of necessity because that would negate the need to acquire and believe in his essence, which is one of the tasks that humans have been given in order to earn their reward. (*wa-qad ʿulima anna –l-qadīma taʿālā mimman lā yuṣaḥḥu an yuḍṭarra ilā murādihī maʿa –t-taklīfi li-anna –l-ʿilma bi-ḏātihī iḏā wuǧiba kawnuhū muktasaban fa-l-ʿilmu bi-irādatihī bi-an yaǧiba ḏālika fīhi maʿa annahū farʿun ʿalā –l-ʿilmi bi-ḏātihī ūlā*). Ibn Aḥmad al-Asadābādī al-Qāḍī ʿAbd al-Ǧabbār, *al-Muġnī fī Abwāb at-Tawḥīd wa-l-ʿAdl*, ed. Ṭāhā Ḥusayn, 14 vols. (Cairo: ad-Dār al-Miṣrīyah li-t-Taʾlīf wa-n-Našr, 1965-74). 7:182. Ragib does not spell out all the steps in this Muʿtazilī argument about the origin of language, which are that since we must know God's intent by acquired knowledge, we have to have some prior knowledge of language before we can do the necessary acquiring. Were we to know God's intent by necessarily evident knowledge then language could be bypassed, but this is not the case. Our prior knowledge of the language in which God subsequently speaks must have come about by convention. Ibid., 7:182-184. See also: Peters, *God's created speech*, 386.

[391] Quran 42:51 (aš-Šūrā)

One may be confronted by someone saying 'seeing as you do not deny that physical signs and noises can be used for communication between people, well then people who are mute can do that for they have a mouth with which to form sounds and we know that people who do not talk can understand and be understood despite having no language'. The answer to this objection (which implies that signage could have been used as a convention before language was created by fiat) is that one understands physical signs through a process of deduction, similar to other proceses of deduction, that would function even if we were to imagine that speech did not exist. People who are mute can only deduce and they have no capacity to form and compose expressions. Their sounds are like the sounds of a child that has not yet grasped those expressions. However, language is only language when it includes compositions of the three types of individual words.

Were there any way to achieve language without education then that which passes between people who are deaf and dumb would necessarily become formed as language, because the defect of combined deafness and dumbness is in the hearing, and deaf and dumb people are unable to speak because of their inability to comprehend through hearing. This proves that the start of the process of language acquisition requires a teacher, and that is what happened when God taught Adam in the ways described above.

One may also be confronted by someone saying 'how did God teach Adam all the names when we know that in every age the people of that time ascribe names to ideas and physical things by either inventing them or by transferring them from other ideas?' The answer to this question is that while some people say that God taught Adam all such names in their individual specifics even though they then appeared at certain times and among certain of his peoples, the correct position is that real knowledge depends on knowledge of principles that can be implemented. These universal ideas, which encompass individual specifics are for example, the substance 'human' or 'horse'.[392] They are also the rules by which the

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[392] Interestingly, this is different from Ibn Fāris' division of the study of language into principles and their applications. For Ibn Fāris, the application (*farʿ*) of the knowledge of Arabic is knowledge of names and attributes such as "horse" and "long" (these are principles for Raġib), while Ibn Fāris' principle (*aṣl*) is discussion of the origin of language and subsequently of the exemplary customs of Bedouin speech. (*inna li-ʿilmi –l-ʿarabi aṣlan wa-farʿan ammā –l-farʿu fa-maʿrifati –l-asmāʾi wa-ṣ-ṣifāti ka-qawlinā raġulun wa-farasun ... wa-ammā –l-aṣlu fa-qawlu ʿalā mawḍūʿi –l-luġati .. ṯumma ʿalā rusūmi –l-ʿarabi fī muḫāṭabātihā*). Ibn Fāris, *aṣ-Ṣāḥibī*, 2. as-Suyūṭī, *al-Muzhir*, 1:4.

realities of things are known such as the multiplication principle in mathematics, the properties of dimension and quantity in geometry, and the principles upon which many a subject is built in the law, theology, and grammar. Knowledge of individual specifics without the principles is not knowledge, and a person who only knows the individual specifics is no scholar but rather a parrot who imitates expressions. Therefore, 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.

When God said 'all the names' he intended 'the expressions and the ideas in single words and combinations, their realities, and the essences of the things in themselves'.[393] The evidence for this is that names are used in two ways, one of which is the first position: the three types that are subject, predicate, and connector (these are expressed by 'noun', 'verb' and 'particle'). This way of using names is what is intended in this verse, for God did not teach Adam 'man' and 'horse' to the exclusion of 'to go', 'to leave', 'from', and 'about'. A human must know what something is in order to be able to name it when presented with it. Don't you see that were we to know words in an Indian or other unknown language without knowing the images that the words represented we would not know these things when we saw them?[394] We would only know mere noises.

We have therefore established that one only knows a word when one knows what it represents, and when this knowledge of the named thing itself is in one's heart. The things that one knows in this way could be substances, accidents of quantity or quality, additional aspects, or any of the other sorts of accidents. Words are made for each single thing according to these considerations and there is no doubt that humans have to comprehend these ideas together and separately in order to know the words produced from amongst them. For example, a single person is called 'so-and-so' when considering his given name, 'man' when considering his genitalia, 'son' when considering his parents, 'father' when considering his children, 'brother' when considering those who surround him and to whom

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[393] Ragib repeats this and a number of the subsequent points at: Ragib, *Quranic Glossary*, 428.

[394] From this point on, following Ragib's explanation that the *asmāʾ* are not just names or nouns, I am free to translate *asmāʾ* as 'words'.

he is related, Qurayshite or Isfahanian when considering his tribe and country, and so on with regard to a countless number of words…[395]

In this passage, Ragib reiterates his position that language is the communication of ideas through a corpus of expressions. If the expressions do not communicate any ideas, or if the expressions themselves are not structured according to the right principles, it is not language. He also makes two claims that apply to both language and other types of knowledge: the first is that all knowledge is structured, and learnt, according to principles, and the second is that in order to know a thing one must know both its name and its essence. I will return to that second epistemological claim in the section below.

The claim that all knowledge runs according to principles, and that species names are an example of those principles in the field of language, is couched here in a way that is typical of Ragib's work. He borrows from the mereological vocabulary of the Classical Language Tradition with the assumption that concepts such as "universals", "species" and "accident" are familiar,[396] but without any sort of comprehensive attempt to use the universals of the *Organon* tradition to describe the principles by which he claims language functions.[397] Ragib then gives the principles a quasi-divine status: it is more noble and more godly to think and learn through a

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[395] Ragib. *Carullah 84*. ff.26a-27a. See Appendix for Arabic text. My translation here follows Carullah 84 with some variations after Ayasofya 212 that can be checked in the notes on the Arabic text.

[396] Mereology is the study of the relationships of parts to wholes, and its starting point is usually Aristotle's *Topics*. Cf. Andrew Arlig, "Medieval Mereology," in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. Edward N. Zalta (http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2011/entries/mereology-medieval/Fall 2011 edition).

[397] By way of contrast, Ragib's younger Andalusian contemporary Ibn Ḥazm (Abū Muḥammad ʿAlī b. Aḥmad, d. 456/1064, of whom see more below) would make the explicit argument that Aristotelian logic provided the methodological tools needed to understand exactly how God taught Adam the names. Ibn Ḥazm, *at-Taqrīb li-Ḥadd al-Manṭiq*, 9-10.

structure of principles and their applications than to simply deal in particulars. This is

reminiscent of his mystic approaches to knowledge as discussed in chapter two.[398]

Ragib makes his claim about the principles of language in order to answer a common-sense

objection to his doctrine that language was created by fiat. How can the fiat model answer the

documented human tendency to constantly expand and manipulate the lexicon? The answer is

that God taught Adam, in addition to all the words and their meanings, principles that humans

could use to produce new words for new contexts.[399]

The record of all these words, old and new, is the source of the data that Ragib produces

during his explanation of what homonymy is, what homonymy isn't, and where homonymy

comes from. Where else but in the lexicon can one find the information that the expression *fulk*

("small ship") can mean both the plural and the singular without any morphological or phonetic

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[398] The presence of a divine element marks Ragib out from those of his contemporaries who shared his esteem for the theoretical principles that were being developed in the tenth and eleventh centuries. Ibn Fāris wrote that while the passage of time had led to the loss of knowledge about certain rare pieces of vocabulary, the principles of religion and the theoretical exactitude and productivity of their application in legal theory, grammar, and metrics meant that "every age has its knowledge, and the noblest knowledge of all is that of our own age". (*wa-ʿulamāʾu hāḏihī –š-šarīʿati wa-in kānū –qtaṣarū min ʿilmi hāḏā [al-muštabahu –llaḏī lā yuqālu fīhi –l-yawma] … fa-qad - ʿtāḏū ʿanhu daqīqa –l-kalāma fī uṣūli –d-dīni wa-furūʿihī min –l-fiqhi wa-l-farāʾiḍi wa-min daqīqi –n-naḥwi wa-ġalīlihī wa-min ʿilmi –l-ʿarūḍi … wa-li-kulli zamānin ʿilmun wa-ašrafu –l-ʿulūmi ʿilmu zamāninā hāḏā wa-l-ḥamdu li-llāh.*) Ibn Fāris, *aṣ-Ṣāḥibī*, 37. Ibn Fūrak also appears to have attempted to draw, from al-Ašʿārī's works, the statement that God revealed the principles of language before allowing its applications to be developed iteratively. Ibn Fūrak, *Maqālāt ed. as-Sāyiḥ*, 42.

[399] It has been remarked on more than one occasion in European-language scholarship that mediaeval Arabic theories of language are synchronic rather than diachronic and consequently lack an explanation of how languages change and develop. However, this downplays the importance of the extended discussions of how vocabularies expand to include new technical and religious terminology, and indeed how they decline as rare words fall away. See for examples Ragib's statement that words in common circulation are hard to change, as well as: Ibn Fāris, *aṣ-Ṣāḥibī*, 34-37; Ragib, *Quranic Glossary*, 725; as-Suyūṭī, *al-Muzhir*, 1:46, 208.

change,[400] or that *ṣaqr* means "very bitter milk" in most Bedouin dialects but "date paste" in the

dialect of most people in Medina?[401]

The dialectical variation within Arabic that allows one expression to mean either sour milk

or date paste is the first source that Ragib enumerates when he lists the places that homonymy

comes from in the methodological introduction to his *Exegesis*. The other sources of homonymy

are lexical as well, and they are also diachronic: the creation of new meanings for existing words.

Specialists in a certain discipline can take an existing connection between an expression and an

idea and change the idea to another one that fits their specific purpose. The expression therefore

becomes homonymous. The most common example of this is the new, specifically Islamic,

meaning that words like prayer and charity came to have for Muslim jurists, theologians, and

grammarians.[402]

In other cases, Ragib explains that an expression already connected to an idea by fiat is

borrowed from that idea and given to a different idea, which already had an expression of its own

in the lexicon. This is the mechanism that he, and others, call *istiʿārah* (borrowing),[403] and the

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[400] Ragib, "Methodological Introduction ed. Nāhī," 82; ———, *Methodological Introduction and Exegesis ed. Farḥāt*, 32. Cf. ———, *Quranic Glossary*, 645.

[401] ———, "Methodological Introduction ed. Nāhī," 83; ———, *Methodological Introduction and Exegesis ed. Farḥāt*, 33.

[402] ———, "Methodological Introduction ed. Nāhī," 83; ———, *Methodological Introduction and Exegesis ed. Farḥāt*, 33. Al-Bāqillānī disagreed, see: Abū Bakr Muḥammad b. aṭ-Ṭayyib al-Bāqillānī, *at-Taqrīb wa-l-Iršād*, ed. ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd b. ʿAlī Abū Zunayd, 3 vols. (Beirut: Muʾassasat ar-Risālah, 1998). 1:387f. Also: Vishanoff, *Islamic Hermeneutics*, 167.

[403] See below (page 172f) and also: Heinrichs, *The Hand of the Northwind*; ———, "*Istiʿārah* and *Badīʿ* and their Terminological Relationship in Early Arabic Literary Criticism," *Zeitschrift für Geschichte der Arabisch-Islamischen Wissenschaften* 1(1984); ———, "Metaphor," in *Encyclopedia of Arabic literature*, ed. Julie Scott Meisami and Paul Starkey (London / New York: Routledge, 1998). This term *istiʿārah* was well-established by Ragib's time, having been used with the apparent assumption that it did not need definition in the work of Qudāmah b. Ǧaʿfar (Abū al-Faraǧ, d. ca. 328/939), and defined by, inter alia, ʿAlī b. ʿĪsā ar-Rummānī (Abū al-Ḥasan, 296/909-384/994). Qudāmah b. Ǧaʿfar, *Kitāb Naqd aš-Šiʿr*, ed. Seger Adrianus Bonebakker (Leiden: Brill, 1956). 103, 104, 129. ʿAlī b. ʿĪsā ar-Rummānī, "an-Nukat fī Iʿǧāz al-Qurʾān," in *Ṯalāṯ Rasāʾil fī Iʿǧāz al-Qurʾān*, ed. Muḥammad

consequence is that the expression in question becomes a homonym. For example, the expression "lion", which is already connected to the idea of a large carnivorous quadruped of yellowish brown colour, is borrowed from the quadruped and given to a brave person despite the fact that this person already has their own lexical expression ("human"). According to Ragib, the difference between the way these two types of language change function is that in the first case the usage must follow a precedent set by specialists in the discipline concerned, whereas in the second case:

> anyone can borrow an expression and use it so long as they intend an idea that is correct, and as long as the idea is true to the comparison. For example, you could say 'I rode a lightening bolt' and intend with that expression that you rode a horse that was fast like lightening.[404]

Anyone can reorder the lexicon, so long as they make sense.

Scholars like Ragib were preserving both linguistic precedent and language development. In the *Quranic Glossary*, the entry for the root *gīm-wāw-zay* includes the following statement: "you can say 'I asked so-and-so to pass me and he did pass me' if you asked someone for water and he gave you water. This is *istiʿārah*".[405] Lexicographers like Ragib have allowed a new connection to be made between the expression "to pass" and the idea of giving water despite the fact that there was already a word for giving water.

Ḫalaf Allāh (Cairo: Dār al-Maʿārif, 1959), 79.

[404] *wa-l-farqu bayna ḥukmi –l-manqūli wa-l-mustaʿāri anna –l-manqūla šarṭuhū an yuttabaʿa fīhi ahlu tilka -ṣ-ṣināʿati wa-l-mustaʿāru li-kulli aḥadin an yastaʿīra fa-yastaʿmalahū iḏā qaṣada maʿnan ṣaḥīḥan wa-yakūnu mutaḍammanan li-maʿnā –t-tašbīhi naḥwi an taqūla rakabtu barqan fa-taʿnī bihī farasan ka-l-barqi surʿatan.* Ragib, "Methodological Introduction ed. Nāhī," 83; ———, *Methodological Introduction and Exegesis ed. Farḥāt*, 33-34.

[405] *qīla –staġaztu fulānan fa-aġāzanī iḏā –stasqaytahū fa-saqāka wa-ḏālika –stiʿāratun.* ———, *Quranic Glossary*, 211.

Ragib understood this iterative process by which lexical precedent was created as something ongoing, potentially even into his own lifetime. Again in the *Quranic Glossary*, his proof for reading God's resurrection (*našr*) of the dead as an *istiʿārah*, in which the source domain is the spreading out (*našr*) of cloth, is a line of poetry from around a century before his own birth.[406] Elsewhere in the same work he uses the poetry of al-Mutanabbī (Abū aṭ-Ṭayyib Aḥmad, 303/915-354/955), a man with whose lifetime his own may well have overlapped, as evidence for the relative pronoun *man* ("who") referring to humans to the exclusion of animals.[407]

It is because Ragib works in both exegetical hermeneutics and poetics that he has such an open view of language and its potential to do new things in the hands of its users. Metaphor in general, and *istiʿārah* in particular, are the mechanisms that break open the lexicon and poetics is the discipline in which language changes and develops.[408] Without them, the lexicon risked

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[406] "[Upon death] the affairs of your life will envelop you after they were spread out [within it] / just as the affairs of God are an enveloping and a resurrection" (*ṭawatka ḫuṭūbu dahrika baʿda našrin / ka-ḏāka ḫuṭūbuhū ṭayyan wa-našrā*). Ibid., 805. The London manuscript has *našrika baʿda dahrin* for *dahrika baʿda našrin* in what must be a scribal error. ———. *Mufradāt al-Ḫaṭīb Collection*. f.183a. Al-Ǧāḥiẓ's (Abū ʿUṯmān ʿAmr b. Baḥr, d. 255/868) recension has a more likely inversion of the order of the last two words of the second hemistich, and attributes the line to Abū al-ʿAtāhīyah (Abū Isḥāq Ismāʿīl, d. ca. 210/825). Abū ʿUṯmān ʿAmr b. Baḥr al-Ǧāḥiẓ, *al-Bayān wa-t-Tabyīn*, ed. ʿAbd as-Salām Muḥammad Hārūn, 4 vols. (Cairo: Maktabat al-Ḫānǧī, 1960). 1:408, 3:257. Al-Mubarrad's recension follows al-Ǧāḥiẓ. Muḥammad b. Yazīd al-Mubarrad, *The Kamil of el-Mubarrad, edited for the German Oriental society from the manuscripts of Leyden, St. Petersburg, Cambridge and Berlin*, ed. William Wright, 2 vols. (Leipzig: G. Kreysing, 1864-1892). 1:230. Dāwūdī's attribution of the line to Diʿbil al-Ḫuzāʿī (148/765-246/860) in his edition of the *Quranic Glossary* appears to be based on a misreading of Wright's edition of *al-Kāmil*.

[407] The full line, which Ragib quotes in The Path to the Nobilities while attributing it to al-Mutanabbī, is: "Around me, everywhere, physiognomies / that you would be wrong to enquire about with the pronoun 'who'" (*ḥawlī bi-kulli makānin minhum ḫilaqun / tuḫṭī iḏā ǧiʾta bi-stifhāmihā bi-man*). Ragib, *The Path to the Nobilities*, 80. In the *Quranic Glossary* he only cites the first hemistich and attributes it to "some modern poets" (*baʿdu –l-muḥdiṯīna*). ———, *Quranic Glossary*, 778. Abū aṭ-Ṭayyib al-Mutanabbī and ʿAbd ar-Raḥmān al-Barqūqī, *Šarḥ Diwān al-Mutanabbī*, 2 vols. (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 2002). 2:1212.

[408] However, Ragib would never have gone so far as to take the step taken by al-Ǧurǧānī later in the eleventh century, most probably several decades after Ragib's death. Al-Ǧurǧānī rejected the lexicon as a theoretical component of language and argued that language is not the intrinsic connection of expressions to ideas fixed by fiat, but rather their contextual combination and the listener's interpretation of this combination. While Ragib, engaged

becoming a set of restrictive precedents and protocols, that which Frank identified as the grammarians' view of language as "a closed system: a self-contained realm of linguistic reality, of semiotic entities variously related to one another by consistent, intrinsic relationships of equivalence and non-equivalence, morphological patterns, rules of syntactic combination, etc.".[409] It was not just grammarians who believed in a closed system. For those working in strictly hermeneutical disciplines, such as the legal theorist al-Ǧaṣṣāṣ (Aḥmad b. ʿAlī, 305/917-370/981), deviations from coinage by fiat are "lexicalized and cannot freely be formed by analogy".[410] Ragib's contemporary al-Bāqillānī agreed.[411] God used such deviations in the Quran because they were part of the Arabic of the time, but as for scholars in the tenth century: "the principle with regard to expressions that deviate from coinage by fiat is they are governed by precedent and found in the lexicon. We may not go beyond those recorded uses".[412]

Metaphor, metonymy, and indeed all figurative language are the process of exchanging one word for another related word. Ragib, and others, explained these mechanisms as deviations from the lexicon, and consequently dependent on the lexicon as a reference point from which changes are made. The relationship between expressions and ideas therefore lies at the root of

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as he was in the lexical practice through his *Quranic Glossary*, was never prepared to abandon the lexicon to this extent, he did share al-Ǧurǧānī's belief in the importance of syntactic structure (*naẓm*), a theoretical concept that had been around since the ninth century and that was part of Ragib's theory of Quranic inimitability (for which see the subsequent chapter). ʿAbd al-Qāhir b. ʿAbd ar-Raḥmān al-Ǧurǧānī, *Dalāʾil al-Iʿǧāz*, ed. Muḥammad Maḥmūd aš-Šinqīṭī (Beirut: Dār al-Maʿrifah, 1978; repr., 1987). 206, 415. Sophia Vasalou, "Iʿǧāz," in *Encyclopedia of Arabic Language and Linguistics Online Edition*, ed. Kees Versteegh, Lutz Edzard, and Rudolf de Jong (Brill Online: Brill, 2010). ———, "The miraculous eloquence of the Qurʾan: general trajectories and individual approaches," *Journal of Qurʾanic Studies* 4, no. 2 (2002): 32.

[409] Frank, "Meanings " 277.

[410] Heinrichs, "Contacts," 269.

[411] al-Bāqillānī, *at-Taqrīb*, 1:354; Vishanoff, *Islamic Hermeneutics*, 166.

[412] *al-aṣlu fī-l-alfāẓi –l-maǧāzi anna ṭarīqahā –s-samʿu wa-mā wurida fī-l-luġati wa-laysa yaǧūzu la-nā an nataʿaddā bi-hā mawḍaʿahā –llatī takallamat –l-ʿarabu bi-hā*. al-Ǧaṣṣāṣ, *Uṣūl al-Fiqh*, 1:367. Al-Ǧaṣṣāṣ, like Ragib, explains *maǧāz* as deviation from coinage by fiat: "*maǧāz* is that which goes beyond the

them all. Expressions and ideas form the binary linguistic structure that enables one to both conceive and explain how figurative language works. *Istiʿārah*, for example, is a mechanism by which an expression is borrowed from one idea and given to another, while *maǧāz*, the larger category of which *istiʿārah* is a part,[413] is the name for any deviation whatsoever from the connection, enshrined in coinage by fiat, between an expression and an idea.[414]

The relationship between expressions and ideas is therefore the best way to understand the binary of literal and non-literal language (*ḥaqīqah* and *maǧāz*): either the expression-idea connection remains fixed according to its fiat coinage (literal), or the expression-idea connection is reworked and remade into something new (non-literal). This new something does not have to be as grand as a poetic metaphor. While literal language is the stable system fixed in place by the lexicon, when "an expression is used according to its original fiat coinage",[415] non-literal language is absolutely everything else, be it a metaphor, an ellipsis, or a pleonasm (however minor).[416] The pithy definition that Ragib settled on in his *Quranic Glossary* is that non-literal language goes walkabout but literal language stays in its place.[417]

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[413] "*Istiʿārah* is a category of *maǧāz*" (*wa-l-stiʿāratu min bābi –l-maǧāz*). Ragib. *Innovative Figures of Speech*. f.11a.

[414] Over a century after Ragib's death, these connections would be the subject of extensive taxonomy and commentary in the "science of coinage" (*ʿilm al-waḍ*). See: Bernard Weiss, "ʿIlm al-waḍ: An Introductory Account of a Later Muslim Philological Science," *Arabica* 34, no. 3 (1987); ———, "Language in Orthodox Muslim Thought: a study of "waḍ al-lughah" and its development" (Ph.D. Thesis, Princeton University, 1966).

[415] *al-kalāmu ḍarbayni ḥaqīqatun wa-maǧāzun fal-ḥaqīqatu –l-lafẓu –l-mustaʿmalu fī-mā wuḍiʿa la-hū fī aṣli –l-luǧati*. Ragib. *Innovative Figures of Speech*. f.4a. *[al-ḥaqīqatu] –l-lafẓu –l-mustaʿmalu fī-mā wuḍiʿa la-hū fī aṣli –l-luǧati min ġayri naqlin wa-lā ziyādatin wa-lā naqṣānin wa-l-maǧāzu ʿalā ʿaksi min ḏālik*. ———, "Methodological Introduction ed. Nāhī," 97; ———, Methodological Introduction and Exegesis ed. Farḥāt, 56. This is an example of how consistent Ragib's positions are across the genres of poetics and exegesis.

[416] The deviation from the original fiat coinage can be very minor indeed. For example, the lengthening of a vowel from *anẓuru* to *anẓūru* (from "I look" to "*I loook") is *maǧāz*. ———, "Methodological Introduction ed. Nāhī," 97-99; ———, *Methodological Introduction and Exegesis ed. Farḥāt*, 55-60.

[417] *al-maǧāzu min –l-kalāmi mā taǧāwaza mawḍaʿahū –llaḏī wuḍiʿa la-hū wa-l-ḥaqīqatu mā lam yataǧāwaz ḏālik*. ———, *Quranic Glossary*, 211-212. Ragib's understanding of *ḥaqīqah* as original fiat coinage and *maǧāz* as

Non-literal language is such a broad category that it must apply to almost all of poetics, and indeed Ragib only addresses the literal/non-literal binary at the very beginning of his poetics manual before moving onto *istiʿārah* and other rhetorical figures in more detail.[418] However, as the references above to al-Ǧaṣṣāṣ indicate, the question of literal and non-literal language is much more important in hermeneutical disciplines such as legal theory, and the Quranic exegesis on which legal theory in part depends. It is in this context that Ella Almagor raised the question of whether "the medieval Arab speaker …[felt] the need for a clear distinction between the lexical meaning of a word, the abstract idea which it comes to convey, and the mode of conveying this idea".[419] Ragib used the linguistic structure of expression and idea to answer this challenge as follows.[420]

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absolutely everything else follows that of al-Ǧaṣṣāṣ, who wrote that the Arabic language was one or the other, and that *ḥaqīqah* is when a thing is named according to coinage by fiat while *maǧāz* is that with which this coinage by fiat is bypassed, and the thing is then named with a non-literal name (*fa-l-ḥaqīqatu mā summiya bihī –š-šayʾu fī aṣli –l-luġati wa-mawḍūʿihā wa-l-maǧāzu mā yaǧūzu bihī –l-mawḍaʿa –llaḏī huwa ḥaqīqatun la-hū fī –l-aṣli wa-summiya bihī mā laysa –l-ismu la-hū ḥaqīqatan*). al-Ǧaṣṣāṣ, *Uṣūl al-Fiqh*, 1:359-361. It is also close to the less-explicitly expressed understanding of Ibn Qutaybah. Heinrichs, "Contacts," 259f; Abū Muḥammad ʿAbdallāh Ibn Qutaybah, *Taʾwīl Muškil al-Qurʾān*, ed. Aḥmad Ṣaqr (Cairo: Dār at-Turāṯ, 1973). 102f. It is impossible to know whether Ragib and al-Ǧaṣṣāṣ' understanding of *maǧāz* might have been shared by Abū ʿUbādah (d. ca. 209/824) some two centuries previously, but were it to have been, it would solve the interpretative difficulties experienced by both Wansborough and Almagor in their respective articles. Following Ragib's model, the *maǧāz* of a Quranic verse could be its paraphrase, its figurative expressions, and indeed pretty much everything else. Cf. Almagor, "The Early Meaning of Majāz."; Wansborough, "*Majāz al-qur'ān*." Ragib's definition of *maǧāz* would in fact solve Wansborough and Almagor's problem along exactly the lines proposed by Heinrichs, whose "etymological translation *cum* interpretation" defines *maǧāz* is "that place in a discourse where the explicit meaning goes beyond … the actual wording of a phrase and leaves it behind". Heinrichs, "The *Ḥaqīqa-Majāz* Dichotomy," 127.

[418] Ragib also makes use of the literal/non-literal binary in his ethics, where unbelievers are only called "human" figuratively (*maǧāzan*) because they lack the reason that defines real humans, and those with lots of money are only figuratively rich because the true riches are those of the soul. Ragib, *Analysis of the Two Creations*, 129 (Chapter 20).

[419] Almagor, "The Early Meaning of Majāz," 314-315.

[420] As, indeed, Heinrichs had hoped: "[a]pproaching the *maǧāz* problem from the angle of the *lafẓ-maʿnā* confusion seems to be very appropriate". Heinrichs, "The *Ḥaqīqa-Majāz* Dichotomy," 126.

A homonymous expression can refer to two different ideas in two different ways at the same time.[421] It can refer to one idea via a mode of literal correspondence between expression and idea as laid down in the lexicon according to coinage by fiat. This mode is called 'literal'. At the same time, it can refer to a different idea via a mode in which there is a deviation from that lexical coinage. This alternative mode is called 'non-literal'. It can be achieved by the simplest of grammatical applications such as the imperative 'do' applying to both men and women, a more complex dual reference such as 'whale' referring to both Pisces in the sky and the mammal in the sea, or by *istiʿārah*. Speakers need not be explicitly conscious of which mode they are using. Nevertheless, in all these cases there must a general overarching idea that connects the two different ideas to which the expression in question refers. This connecting idea must also be discernible to those scholars who are concerned with language. For example, if one were to say 'fear the lion and the donkey' and mean both the beasts in question (literally) and the humans who share their characteristics of bravery and stupidity (non-literally), then the connecting idea which would work in both the literal and non-literal modes would be 'fear the brave animal and the stupid animal'.[422]

Ragib uses the pairing of literal and non-literal, the latter inclusive of *istiʿārah*, to explain how apparently ambiguous language works, and to answer Almagor's query about the modes by which ideas are conveyed. The linguistic structure for his explanation is the pairing of expression and idea, and the literal and the non-literal are two of the modes by which they interact with each other and with the lexicon. Ragib also provides an explicit insubstantiation of the "abstract idea"

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[421] "At the same time" is the crucial point of contention. Jurists, legal theorists, and theologians had been arguing about this point since the ninth century. See Vishanoff, *Islamic Hermeneutics*, 216-219. Ragib sides with the Muʿtazilī al-Ǧubbāʾī (Abū ʿAlī Muḥammad, d. 303/916), the Muʿtazilī al-Qāḍī ʿAbd al-Ǧabbār, and the Ḥanafī al-Ǧaṣṣāṣ against the Ḥanafī Abū al-Ḥasan al-Karḫī (d. 340/952) and the Muʿtazilī Abū Hāšim (the son of al-Ǧubbāʾī, d. 321/933). See: al-Ǧaṣṣāṣ, *Uṣūl al-Fiqh*, 1:77f, 1:369-370; al-Qāḍī ʿAbd al-Ǧabbār, *al-Muġnī*, 17:84; Abū Isḥāq Ibrāhīm aš-Šīrāzī, *Šarḥ al-Lumaʿ*, ed. ʿAbd al-Maǧīd Turkī, 2 vols. (Beirut: Dār al-Ġarb al-Islāmī, 1988). 1:177.

[422] This is a paraphrase of: Ragib, "Methodological Introduction ed. Nāhī," 123-125; ———, *Methodological Introduction and Exegesis ed. Farḥāt*, 98-101.

that Almagor was looking for when Ragib explains how "brave animal" is the "general idea" that

connects "brave lion" and "brave human".

The Referents of "Idea"

What are the limits of "the idea" in Ragib's structure of linguistic assumptions? Is the

maʿnā an idea in the mind, or can it also refer to external physical reality? On the one hand, this

is where the aesthetic impact of a theory with only two parts breaks down. However, Ragib is

indeed aware of the three-way conceptual difference between ideas, words, and things; between

mind, language, and reality.

Ragib knew that one must comprehend the essence of the thing being named (the

musammā) if one is to understand the name. Otherwise, we would be able to learn foreign

languages just by parroting their sounds.[423] He also knew that the things being named could be

physical things (*aʿyān*) or they could be ideas (*maʿānī*).[424] Indeed, the ideas might not even be

connected to any physical reality at all: "imagination is when you conceive a form in your soul,

whether or not it has any existence outside, for example the form of a person who does not exist

such as the phoenix or hircocervus".[425]

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[423] ———, *Quranic Glossary*, 428. And towards the end of the long quotation above from the *Exegesis*, see note 395.

[424] "ascribe names to ideas and physical things", see quotation from the *Exegesis* at page 125.

[425] *wa-l-wahmu ṣūratun tatṣawwaruhā fī nafsika sawāʾun kāna la-hā wuǧūdun min ḫāriǧin ka-ṣūratu insānin mā lam yakun la-hā* [Ayasofya 212 has *la-hū*] *wugūdun ka-ʿanqāʾa muġribin wa-ʿazāyila* [sic.] *wa-l-ḫayālu taṣawwuru mā adrakahū –l-ḥāssatu fi-n-nafs*. Ragib. *Carullah 84*. f.27a. The word *ʿazāyila* should be read *ʿanz-ayyil*. It is the hircocervus, or "goat-stag", from the Arabic translation of Aristotle's *On Interpretation*. Al-Fārābī had paired it with "phoenix" to the same effect as Ragib does here (Zimmermann notes that al-Fārābī was following the translation of Aristotle's *Physics*, which mentions both non-existent animals). Aristotle, "On Interpretation," 16a.15f; ———, *Organon Aristotelis*, 60; Abū Naṣr Muḥammad al-Fārābī, *Šarḥ al-Fārābī li-Kitāb Arisṭūṭālīs fī-l-ʿIbārah*, ed. Wilhelm Kutsch and Stanley Marrow (Beirut: Dār al-Mašriq, 1986). 28 (lines 14-15 and 21-22); Zimmermann, *Commentary and Short Treatise*, 15 (note 4).

In a discussion of the nature of writing with respect to the Quran, Ragib makes the following ontological statement:

> There are four ways that a thing can exist: (1) existence in essence, which refers to the physical things; (2) existence in human thought, which refers to the ideas; (3) existence in the expression; and (4) existence in writing, the final existence that is only ever subsequent to existence in memory or in expression.[426]

The simple pairing of expression and idea has perforce been expanded to take into account the real world outside language. Ragib includes the fourth category of existence in writing because he is at this point concerned about the status of God's written word in the Quran, but for our purposes here the interesting ontological categories are (1), (2), and (3): the expression, the idea, and the physical thing; language, mind, and reality. The problem is whether the expression relates to the idea, to the physical thing, or to both.

Ragib was aware of this problem too, and he used it as a stick with which to beat the Muʿtazilah. In his discussion in *On Creeds* of the controversy over the Quran being an attribute of God or a recited and copied thing among humanity, Ragib describes a golden age in which there were but two valid approaches to the problem: a conservative one that chose not to investigate further, and the divinely inspired approach of those who had attained the highest ranks of certainty. This happy situation persisted until a group of dialecticians (*ǧadalīyīn*) neglected God's guidance and went beyond revelation into error:

> They failed to advance beyond the stage of things that can be sensed and described into the stage where things that are reasoned are investigated. They took speech to be just

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[426] Paraphrase of: *al-ašyāʾu la-hā arbaʿu wuǧūdātin wuǧūdun fī ḏātihī wa-huwa –l-aʿyānu wa-wuǧūdun fī fikri –l-insāni wa-huwa –l-maʿānī wa-wuǧūdun fī lafẓihī wa-huwa –l-ʿibāratu wa-wuǧūdun fī-l-kitābati wa-huwa wuǧūdun kitābīyun wa-l-wuǧūdu –l-kitābīyu āḫaru –l-wuǧūdāti iḏ lā yūǧadu –š-šayʾu kitābatan illā baʿda an yūǧada ḥifẓan aw lafẓan*. Ragib, *On Creeds*, 274. This same four-part division is found in Ibn Wahb al-Kātib: Ibn Wahb al-Kātib, *al-Burhān [an-Naqd]*, 10.

something sensed, and thought that it was impossible for a body that could be sensed, which was in a place, to then be in another place. They did not know that pure reasoned forms are different from shapes that can be sensed. They also disagreed amongst themselves.

The bulk of the Muʿtazilah said that God's speech never reaches the point of existence. This is because speech is a series of composed letters, and each letter cannot exist until the previous letter has ceased to exist. Things that exist cannot be combined with things that do not exist, and therefore the existence of God's speech cannot be conceived of in any way, neither in the souls of those who memorize it, nor in the recitation of those who recite it, nor in the writing of its scribes. That which exists in all these cases is a human act and a creation attributable to humans from every aspect. No part of God's speech has ever existed, neither now nor in the time of the Prophet.[427]

The Kullābīyah claimed that God's speech subsisted in the essence of the creator, and that it was neither a sound, nor a letter, nor a command, nor a prohibition, nor indeed was it any part of speech. The Quran does not exist among humans at all, and indeed with investigation it is not God's speech, for the Quran is the sounds and the letters that are an expression of God's speech.[428]

Perhaps the mistake that they made was with regard to the fact that 'Quran' is a homonym. It applies to the speech that subsists in the essence of the creator, and to that which is in the

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[427] This is an accurate, albeit unsympathetic, representation of the Muʿtazilī position as laid out by al-Qāḍī ʿAbd al-Ǧabbār. Al-Qāḍī wrote that God's speech was "an accident that can never exist in a place" (ʿaraḍun yastaḥīlu kawnuhū maḥallan). The composition of God's speech is an aspect of mind (maʿqūl), not of external reality. Whether divine or human, speech cannot be composed outside the mind because composition in external reality requires the combination of two things that exist, while in speech each letter replaces the previous one "and if we allowed them both to remain then something that existed would be composed with something nonexistent, and that is impossible" (fa-law aṯbatnā –l-baqāʾa fīhimā la-adā ilā kawni –l-mawǧūdi muʾallafan bi-l-maʿdūmi wa-hāḏā muḥāl). al-Qāḍī ʿAbd al-Ǧabbār, al-Muġnī, 16:227.

[428] This is an accurate representation of the position of Ibn Kullāb (Abū Muḥammad ʿAbdallāh b. Saʿīd, d. ca. 241/855) as reported by al-Ašʿarī: the Quran among humans is an expression (ʿibārah) of God's speech. Human speech is made up of commands and prohibitions, whereas God's speech has no sound or any other divisions. al-Ašʿarī, Maqālāt, 584-585.

hearts of the believers, and to the written copies. This means that the Quran is three things each of which is different from the other, and indeed many different things.[429]

Were the Muʿtazilah and the Kullābīyah to have taken into consideration that most simple of considerations, that reasoned forms are different from things that can be sensed, then they would not have been so foolish. After all, we know that pieces of knowledge can travel from the soul of the teacher to the soul of the pupil without leaving the soul of the teacher. The piece of knowledge can then exist in the two souls at the same time. The form of a piece of handiwork is reasoned in the soul of its creator and then exists as a thing that can be sensed when it has been made, in the same way as an engraving exists on the ring and in the wax imprint without leaving the ring, and a single form can be reflected in many mirrors without it leaving its formed substance. If this principle is established for the Quran, which is God's speech (albeit that it cannot be compared to human speech with regard to nobility), then it can scarcely be surprising that God's speech exists at one and the same time with God on the preserved tablet, and with humans in their souls, their recitations, in the hearing of those who listen to it being read, and in the written copies.[430]

Ragib's point is straightforward: the Muʿtazilah fail to understand that the homonymous expression "Quran" refers to both ideas and to physical things.[431] Rather than being part of the problem of language versus mind versus reality, homonymy is the solution. Expressions can refer to both ideas and to things.

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[429] This is indeed the mistake that they made, or rather, in the case of al-Qāḍī ʿAbd al-Ǧabbār, the conviction to which they held. See the subsequent chapters below and: al-Qāḍī ʿAbd al-Ǧabbār, *al-Muġnī*, 7:14.

[430] Ragib, *On Creeds*, 168-169.

[431] Ragib's position on how God's speech <u>reaches</u> humans is discussed just before this quoted passage, in terms similar to his *Exegesis* (see note 395). Ragib writes that there are two kinds of speech: that which is sensed (*maḥsūs*) and that which is in the mind (*maʿqūl*). The *maḥsūs* speech is that which relies on the physical abilities to speak and hear, and on the transmission of the sound through the air. The *maʿqūl* speech is the ideas behind the expressions. God is capable of making his ideas reach humans in a number of different ways: direct *maḥsūs* speech, inspiration, divine command without sound, etc. Ibid., 163-164. Mī Lawḥī is mistaken in his identification of this passage with the Ašʿarī distinction between *kalām nafsī* and *kalām lafẓī*. Mīr Lawḥī, *Rāǧeb*, 36-39, 109-115. The Ašʿarī binary was designed to solve the problem of the status of the Quran in the world by positing two separate ontological categories of Quran: a *nafsī* one with God and a *lafẓī* one among humans. Ragib, on the other hand, uses a single linguistic structure (homonymy) to show how the Quran can be both divine and human at the same time. Cf. Key, "Language and Literature," 35.

The relation of words to things comes up in another related theological talking point, the meaning of the word "name" (*ism*) in the invocation "in the name of God" (the *basmalah*) with which the Quran and many of its suras begin. Once again, Ragib turns to homonymy and remarks: "the disagreement about whether the name is the thing named or something else is really two opinions coming from two different perspectives, each correct on its own terms".[432] Ragib's explanation is that "name" is a homonym, the expression of which can either refer to the thing named (as in "I saw Zayd", the *musammā*) or the naming of the thing (as in "I called my son 'Zayd'", the *tasmīyah*). In the absence of an assumption of homonymy, the explanations of this issue look very different. Al-Bāqillānī maintains that the name and the thing named are identical in essence, because he is determined to ensure that God's attributes cannot be seen as separate from God.[433] This forces him to maintain elsewhere that the word "fire" cannot be the name of the conflagration, because if it was, then it would be identical to the conflagration, and the letters f-i-r-e would burn the speaker's mouth. Instead, he says that the act of naming that involves the letters f-i-r-e is ontologically separate from the name. [434] Homonymy enables Ragib to avoid such tortuous reasoning, and he can simply say that "no reasoning person" would maintain that the letters Z-a-y-d are the same as the person Zayd.

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[432] *wa-mā dukira min –l-ḫilāfi fī anna –l-isma huwa –l-musammā aw ġayruhū fa-qawlāni qālūhumā bi-naẓarayni muḫtalifayni wa-kullāhumā ṣaḥīḥun bi-naẓarin wa-naẓar*. Ragib, *Methodological Introduction and Exegesis ed. Farḥāt*, 111.

[433] *anna –l-isma huwa –l-musammā bi-ʿaynihī wa-dātihī*. Al-Bāqillānī then goes on to imply that a name is *literally* an actual thing: "the act of naming that indicates the thing named is only a name in the non-literal sense" (*wa-t-tasmīyatu –d-dāllatu ʿalayhi –sman ʿalā sabīli –l-maǧāz*). al-Bāqillānī, *al-Inṣāf*, 57-58. Al-Bāqillānī is concerned to combat the Muʿtazilī position that God's names are just human speech acts that describe him, for which see: Naṣr Ḥāmid Abū Zayd, *al-Ittiǧāh al-ʿAqlī fī-t-Tafsīr: dirāsah fī qaḍīyat al-maǧāz fī-l-qurʾān ʿinda al-muʿtazilah* (Beirut: Dār at-Tanwīr, 1982). 83-84; al-Ašʿarī, *Maqālāt*, 172. See also my discussion of the divine attributes starting at page 159 below.

[434] Abū Bakr Muḥammad b. aṭ-Ṭayyib al-Bāqillānī, *Kitāb at-Tamhīd*, ed. R. J. McCarthy (Beirut: al-Maktabah aš-Šarqīyah, 1957). 232-233. Cf. Abū Barakāt ʿAbd ar-Raḥmān Ibn al-Anbārī, *Kitāb al-Inṣāf fī Masāʾil al-Ḫilāf / die grammatischen Streitfragen der Basrer und Kufer herausgegeben, erklärt und eingeleitet*, ed. Gotthold Weil (Leiden: Brill, 1913). 23; Ibn Fūrak, *Maqālāt ed. as-Sāyiḥ*, 38; al-Mufīd, *Awāʾil*, 55-56.

Ferdinand de Saussure (1857-1913) thought that surrogationalism, the mistaken belief that language is a nomenclature in which words just stand for things, was at the heart of the problem of language, mind, and reality.[435] Saussure's answer was that *[l]e signe linguistique unit non une chose et un nom, mais un concept et une image acoustique.*[436] Ragib, on the other hand, who organised his linguistic structures differently, believed that a sound pattern can refer to both a concept and a thing. The difference between these two theories lies in the fact that Ragib did not share Saussure's assumption that concept and sound pattern (*signifié* and *signifiant*) were part of a third entity called a sign (*signe*). For Saussure, it was the sign that provided order and structure to the *plan indéfini des idées confuses* and *[plan] non moins indéterminé des sons*,[437] but for Ragib, as we have seen, polysemy provided enough structures to link the two planes together without confusion or indeterminacy.

Truth and Quranic Ambiguity

Just as Ragib assumes that expressions can refer to both ideas and to things, he understands truth as the accurate correspondence between that which is in a person's heart and something external to that person. The something external can be a thing, an idea, or an action. He does not understand truth, or truthfulness, in terms of the relationship between a speech act and external physical reality. Instead, "the truth" (*al-ḥaqq*) is either the correspondence between a fact of life and our knowledge that it is real (for example *death is real*) or it is the correspondence between

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[435] Harris and Taylor, *The Western tradition*, 221.

[436] "A linguistic sign is not a link between a thing and a name, but between a concept and a sound pattern". Ferdinand de Saussure, *Cours de Linguistique Générale*, ed. Charles Bally, Albert Sechehaye, and Albert Riedlinger (Paris: Payot, 1949). 98; ———, *Course in General Linguistics*, trans. Roy Harris (London: Duckworth, 1983; repr., 2005). 66.

[437] "[P]lane of vague, amorphous thought" and "equally featureless plane of sound". ———, *Cours*, 156; ———, *Course*, 110-111.

the belief that an idea or thing exists and its actual existence (for example *he believes that resurrection is real*).[438] Truthfulness (*aṣ-ṣidq*) is primarily a correct predication in a speech act as a result of correspondence between the predication in a person's heart and the external idea or thing concerned.[439]

Truth is therefore both a quality of language and a quality of external physical reality. It is not something that enables us to differentiate between language and reality in the way that Gottlob Frege (1848-1925) intended when he said:

> it is only when we are concerned with whether what is said is true or false that we are not satisfied with merely grasping the thought … it is the striving for truth that drives us always to advance from the sense to the reference.[440]

Frege thought that expressions referred to ideas and that we only cared about external physical reality when we needed to evaluate the truth of the expressions. For Ragib, on the other hand, truth is the realm of ontological fact in which nothing is disputed. This includes things that today one might call a belief rather than a fact, such as divine reward and punishment. Ragib's concept

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[438] Ragib writes that *al-ḥaqq* is used in two ways: (1) with regard to an existing thing the necessary existence of which is required by wisdom (*wuǧūduhū bi-ḥasabi muqtaḍī –l-ḥikmah*), or (2) with regard to a belief that corresponds to the existence of a thing in itself (*li-l-iʿtiqādi –l-muṭabaqi li-wuǧūdi –š-šayʾi fī nafsihī*) or a statement of belief that corresponds to the idea of the thing that the idea relates to (*fī-l-qawli –l-muṭābaqi li-maʿnā –š-šayʾi –llaḏī huwa ʿalayhi*). Ragib, "Methodological Introduction ed. Nāhī," 97; ———, *Methodological Introduction and Exegesis ed. Farḥāt*, 55.

[439] Ragib writes that:
> The core of truth and falsity is the speech act, whether past or future, a promise or otherwise. Truth and falsity are only the primary matter in speech acts, and in speech acts they are only ever predicates … truth and falsity may be accidents in parts of speech other than the predicate, such as requests for information [that truthfully reveal the questioner's ignorance]. (*aṣ-ṣidqu wa-l-kiḏbu aṣluhumā fī-l-qawli māḍiyan kāna aw mustaqbalan waʿdan kāna aw ġayrahū wa-lā yakūnāni bi-l-qaṣdi –l-awwali illā fī-l-qawli wa-lā yakūnāni fī-lqawli illā fī-l-ḥabari dūna ġayrihī min aṣnafi –l-kalāmi … wa-qad yakūnāni bi-l-ʿaraḍi fī ġayrihī min anwāʿi –l-kalāmi ka-l-stifhām…*

———, *Quranic Glossary*, 478. In his ethical work he defines truthfullness as the correspondence between internal speech and the thing being thought about (*ḥaddu -ṣ-ṣidqi –t-tammi huwa muṭābaqatu –l-qawli -ḍ-ḍamīri wa-l-muḫbari ʿanhu*). ———, *The Path to the Nobilities*, 193.

[440] Quotated translations from *Über Sinn und Bedeutung* (in P. Geach and M. Black, *Philosophical writings of Gottlob Frege* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1966). 62,63) in: Harris and Taylor, *The Western tradition*, 200-201.

of right and wrong was inextricably caught up with his beliefs, and in his major ethical work he writes that "there is no worthier pillar on which rests the survival of the world than truth, for were a world without truth to be imagined, it would be a world without order that would not survive".[441]

What happens when these lofty principles come into contact with the practice of Quranic exegesis? The answer is that the linguistic structures and assumptions that we have been discussing provide Ragib with sufficient conceptual resources to deal with most of the problems he encounters. What is particularly interesting is that he in no way seeks to downplay the difficulties of exegesis and the ambiguities of language. In fact, he expresses a preference for complexity and a degree of comfort with confusion. Behind this comfort, as we now might have come to expect, lies a confidence that scholars have the potential to reach the highest levels of divine knowledge and certainty.

For Ragib, the Quran contained linguistic ambiguity. The name that the Quran itself gave to this ambiguity was *mutašābih* or "mutual similarity", which meant that there were Quranic expressions that resembled other expressions, and Quranic ideas that resembled other ideas.[442] The ambiguity came from the fact that the human reader did not always know which idea God intended when he used which expression. While the Quran contained ambiguity it did not contain contradictions, the difference between the two being that ambiguity is linguistic,[443]

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[441] *wa-ṣ-ṣidqu ağdaru arkāni baqāʾi –l-ʿālami ḥattā law tūhamu murtafaʿan la-mā ṣaḥḥa niẓāmuhū wa-baqāʾuh.* Ragib, *The Path to the Nobilities*, 193. I have discussed Ragib's attitude to linguistic, Quranic, and poetic truth in: Key, "Language and Literature." See also: Ragib, *Exegesis ed. aš-Šidī*, 124, 1297.

[442] Ragib reiterates his position on the *mutašābih* across the following works: ———, *Exegesis ed. aš-Šidī*, 412-428, 1347-1350; ———, *Exegesis ed. Sardār*, 226-230; ———, "Methodological Introduction ed. Nāhī," 115-118; ————, *Methodological Introduction and Exegesis ed. Farḥāt*, 86-90 ; ———, *On Creeds*, 27, 186-190; ———, *Quranic Glossary*, 443-445. He references Quran 3:7 and 4:126. See also note 291.

[443] Examples include ambiguity resulting from rare words, homonyms, brevity, prolixity, and syntactic composition.

whereas contradictions are irreconcilable references to external physical reality (for example "Zayd is going" and "Zayd is not going" referring to the same Zayd, the same place, and the same time).[444] There are aspects of the Quran that are wholly unknowable for humans, but these are divine mysteries such as the last day, and they are not the result of language. Ragib calls these unknowables "ambiguous solely with regard to the idea", as opposed to ambiguity that involves expressions.[445]

Two problems, and two consequent tasks remain: solving the linguistic ambiguity, and determining which Quranic verses fall in which category and therefore whether they can indeed be solved. Both these tasks fall to the scholars. Ragib identifies the highest ranks of scholars, whose understanding and piety is such that their understanding of the Quran can be relied upon, with those firmly rooted in knowledge (*ar-rāsiḫūna fī-l-ʿilm*) who can be read as the only group other than God to understand the whole Quran.[446]

———, *Exegesis ed. aš-Šidī*, 416-417; ———, *Quranic Glossary*, 444.

[444] ———, *Exegesis ed. aš-Šidī*, 1348.

[445] *mutašābihun min ğihati –l-maʿnā faqaṭ*. ———, *Quranic Glossary*, 443-444. In the *Exegesis* Ragib classes the syntactic confusion in Quran 48:25 (al-Fatḫ, in which the verbal phrase *ant taṭaʾūhum* is postponed until after its object) as an ambiguity of idea alone, whereas in the *Quranic Glossary* he identifies the same verse as an ambiguity of expression. ———, *Exegesis ed. aš-Šidī*, 418; ———, *Quranic Glossary*, 444. Elsewhere in the *Exegesis*, Ragib refers to aspects of God, such as the place that he is in, that cannot be fully known through the expression (*lā yumkinu –l-kašfu ʿan ḥaqāʾiqihā bi-l-lafẓ*) and must instead by known through God's inspiring light (*wa-innamā yudrikuhū –l-insānu bi-ḥasabi mā ğaʿalahū la-hū min nūrihī*). ———, *Exegesis ed. Sardār*, 222. In *On Creeds*, Ragib describes, without identifying them, Quranic verses in which the expression could refer to a number of different ideas and while reason provides some guidance, only God knows which one he intended. Ragib compares this to someone approaching a group of people and while he knows Zayd is amongst them, he does not know exactly where Zayd is. It seems most likely that this passage refers to those same parts of the Quran that cannot, by virtue of their subject matter, be known by humans. (*anna fī-l-qurʾāna āyātun fussirat ʿalā ʿašarati awğuhin fa-ṣāʿidan wa-l-lafẓu yaḥtamilu –l-kulla wa-l-ʿaqlu yadfaʿu ašyāʾa minhā wa-murādu –llāhi wa-in lam yaḫruğ min wāḥidatin min hāḏihī –l-wuğūhi fa-laysa huwa maʿlūman la-nā muʿayyanan ... fa-inna man ṣādafa qawman wa-ʿalima anna zaydan maṯalan huwa fī-mā baynahum lākin lā yaʿrifuhū muʿayyanan…*) ———, *On Creeds*, 190.

[446] Those firmly rooted in knowledge (*ar-rāsiḫūna fī-l-ʿilm*) know what humans are able and unable to know (*maʿrifata mā li-l-insāni sabīlun ilā maʿrifatihī mimmā lā sabīla la-hū*), because it is the wise (*al-ḥukamāʾ*) who know what may and may not be known , and by doing so occupy the noblest rank (*humu –llaḏīna yumayyizūna bayna mā yumkinu ʿilmuhū wa-mā lā yumkinu an yuʿlama…wa hāḏā ašrafu manzilatin li-l-ḥukamāʾ*). ———, *Exegesis ed. aš-Šidī*, 426-427. Ragib allows that both readings of Quran 4:126 are possible. See note 291.

How are scholars able to conquer the problem of linguistically ambiguous Quran? Ragib

believes that one factor in their favour is that while there may be ambiguity about exactly what

God intends, his general or overall meaning is always apparent. It is not as if the Quran were in a

foreign language.[447] This is a substantial limit on ambiguity, and it rests on a belief in a God who

makes sense. Ragib goes further: if speech is from God, then it is in accordance with reason and

if it is not in accordance with reason then it is not from God.[448] This fits with his ethical slogan

that reason and revelation are mutually dependent,[449] and the way that he describes the scholars

who use their reason to interpret the Quran also matches the high aspiration for humanity that he

lays out in his ethics: that people follow the prophets.[450] Indeed, the reasons that a reasonable

God would make some of the Quran linguistically ambiguous were to train the scholars' minds,

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[447] Ragib explains this point as follows. He makes a distinction between knowing God's overall intent (*muğmalan*) and knowing it in detail (*mufaṣṣalan*). Ambiguity resides in the detailed knowledge, but detailed knowledge is less important. The examples of unknowable intent that Ragib gives are the mysterious letters that appear at the beginning of a number of Quranic verses, and those religious ordinances we are unaware of the reason behind:

> That which some people say, that if God can address us without making us know his intent then he might as well address us in an African or Byzantine language, can be answered as follows: the intent of Byzantine and African speech is unknown whether it is taken together as a whole or broken down into its separate parts. However, the intent of the ambiguous parts of the Quran is known when it is taken together as a whole but unknown when broken down into its separate parts, because each verse has been explained by exegetes in a number of different ways. We know that God's intent must be adhered to, but we do not know which of these different ways God intended. This is clear, and it follows the principle that it is not inconceivable for God to charge us to recite letters the ideas behind which we do not know and then reward us for our recitation of them. In the same way, he charges us with actions that we we do not know the wisdom behind in order to reward us for performing them. (*wa-mā qāla baʿḍuhum innahū law ğāza an yuḫāṭibanā ṯumma lā yuʿarrifunā murādahū la-ğāza an yuḫāṭibanā bi-kalāmi –z-zanği wa-r-rūmi fa-l-ğawābu ʿanhu anna kalāma –r-rūmi wa-z-zanği lā yuʿlamu minhu –l-murādu muğmalan wa-lā mufaṣṣalan wa-l-mutašābihu yuʿlamu minhu murāduhū muğmalan wa-in lam naʿlamhu mufaṣṣalan li-anna kulla āyatin qad fassarahā –l-mufassirūna ʿalā awğuhin fa-maʿlūmun anna –l-murāda lā yuḫrağu minhu ṯumma taʿyīnu murādi –llāhi taʿālā minhā ġayru maʿlūmin wa-hāḏā ẓāhirun ʿalā annahū lam yakun yumtanaʿu an yukallifanā taʿālā tilāwata aḥrufin lā naʿrifu maʿānāhā fa-yuṯībanā ʿalā tilāwatihā kamā yukallifunā afʿālan lā naʿrifu waǧha –l-ḥikmati fīhā li-yuṯībanā ʿalayhā*).

Ibid., 424-426.

[448] Ibid., 1349.

[449] ———, Analysis of the Two Creations, 117-121 (chapter 18).

[450] *an yaṣīra –n-nāsu tabʿan li-l-anbiyāʾ*. Ragib, *Exegesis ed. aš-Šidī*, 428. See also note 284.

to enable them to earn the rewards they deserve for their efforts, to demonstrate their nobility, and "to demonstrate the nobility of thought".[451]

The Value of Complexity and Analogy

It would appear that linguistic ambiguity was a problem, albeit a good sort of problem that could be solved by an analytical process that brought divine rewards to scholars. However, Ragib's philosophy of language, as has already been noted, was more than just a hermeneutic. He had ideas about how language should be produced as well as how it should be interpreted. These ideas applied to everybody who used language: both God and humanity.[452]

In *The Path to the Nobilities*, Ragib says while discussing the role of the teacher that it is the right and the duty of scholars to guide those who wish to be taught on the right path with kind words "and oblique speech, for communication is more effective when it is oblique than when it is straightforward".[453] He then gives five examples of how this can be the case:

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[451] *iẓhāru šarafi –l-fikr*. Ibid., 428-429. See also: ———, *On Creeds*, 186.

[452] I reached the same conclusion when reviewing Ragib's ideas about Quranic inimitability. See: Key, "Language and Literature." And for a comparison to al-Ġazālī on the same subject: Paul A. Hardy, "Epistemology and Divine Discourse," in *The Cambridge Companion to Classical Islamic Theology*, ed. Tim Winter (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 292. Cf. also Carter's statement that "the language of the holy texts conforms entirely to the principles of human discourse". Carter, "Pragmatics and Contractual Language," 26.

[453] *wa-taʿrīḍin fī-l-ḫiṭābi fa-t-taʿrīḍu ablaġu min –t-taṣrīḥi*. Other translations for *taʿrīḍ* could be "circumlocutionary", "periphrastic", or "equivocal". It is not one of the terms in Ragib's manual of poetics, but in the *Quranic Glossary* he defines it as:
> language that has two aspects, one true and one false, or one explicit and one implicit. For example Quran 2:235 'your *taʿrīḍ* to women is not a sin'. It is said that such *taʿrīḍ* is saying 'you are beautiful' while doubting that fact. (*wa-t-taʿrīḍu kalāmun la-hū waġhāni min ṣidqin wa-kiḏbin wa ẓāhirin wa-bāṭinin qāla wa-lā ǧunāḥa ʿalaykum fī-mā ʿarraḍtum bihī min ḫuṭbati –n-nisāʾi qīla huwa an yaqūlu la-hā anti ǧamīlatun wa-marġūbun fī-ka wa-naḥwu ḏālika*).

Ragib, *Quranic Glossary*, 560. For some justification of my translation of *balāġah* as effective communication see: Key, "Language and Literature," 37-40.

[1] Virtuous souls, because they have a natural inclination towards the discovery of ideas, tend to communicate obliquely because they love to think through the ideas behind language.[454]

[2] Oblique communication preserves our awe and covers up our shame.[455]

[3] Straightforward communication has but a single aspect whereas oblique communication has a number of aspects, which in itself makes oblique communication more effective.[456]

[4] Oblique communication can be expressed in multiple different ways, and can therefore be adduced for multiple different reasons. Straightforward communication, however, can only be used for a single purpose according to its single expressive option.[457]

[5] A straightforward prohibition can be enticing.[458]

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[454] *anna –n-nafsa –l-fāḍilata li-maylihā ilā –stinbāṭi –l-maʿānī yamīlu ilā –t-taʿrīḍi šaġfan bi-stiḫrāǧi maʿnāhu bi-l-fikr*. Ragib, *The Path to the Nobilities*, 178.

[455] *anna –t-taʿrīḍa lā tuntahaku bihī suġūfu –l-haybati wa-lā yurtafaʿu bihī satru –l-ḥišmah*. Ibid., 179.

[456] Ragib goes on to give Quran 39:73 (az-Zumar) as an example of communication that has multiple aspects. The text with which he introduces the Quranic quote is not entirely clear. Al-ʿAğamī has:
> Straightforward communication has but a single aspect whereas oblique communication has a number of aspects, which in itself makes oblique communication more eloquent, and from this aspect [also] a great number of answers have been elided with regard to the necessary conditions for reward and punishment. For example, Quran 39:73… (*annahū laysa li-t-taṣrīḥi illā waǧhun wāḥidun wa-li-t-taʿrīḍi wuǧūhun fa-min hāḏā –l-waǧhi yakūnu ablaġun wa-min hāḏā –l-waǧhi ḫudifa aǧwibatun [/-tan?] kaṯīrun [sic.] min aš-šurūṭi –l-muqtaḍīyati li-ṯ-ṯawābi wa-l-ʿuqābi naḥwi qawli –llāhi taʿālā…*)

Ibid. A manuscript variant, however, has:
> …which in itself makes oblique communication more eloquent, and because of this same idea, a great number of answers have been elided with regard to the necessary conditions for reward and punishment… (*…fa-min hāḏā –l-waǧhi yakūnu ablaġun wa-li-hāḏā –l-maʿnā ḫudifa aǧwibatun kaṯīran [sic.] min aš-šurūṭi…*)

———. *Ms. of aḏ-Ḏarīʿah ilā Makārim aš-Šarīʿah [The Path to the Nobilities]*. Gedik 17308/1 (dated 1605), Afyon Gedik Ahmet Paşa İl Halk Kütüphanesi, Milli Kütüphane-Ankara, Istanbul. f.48b.

[457] *anna li-t-taʿrīḍi ʿibārātun muḫtalifatun fa-yumkinu īrāduhū ʿalā wuǧūhin muḫtalifatin wa-lā yumkinu īrādu –t-taṣrīḥi illā ʿalā waǧhin wāḥidin iḏ laysa la-hū illā ʿibāratun wāḥidah*. ———, *The Path to the Nobilities*, 179.

[458] *anna ṣarīḥa –n-nahī dāʿin ilā –l-iġrāq*. Ragib then cites a popular saying, a line of poetry, and a prophetic Hadith that make the same point. Ibid.

We have met the idea behind Ragib's [1] already: scholars love thinking, and thinking is in and of itself a good thing. The extra thought that is required by language that is not straightforward is therefore also a good thing. In [3], complexity in the sense of multiple interpretative options is given a poetic stamp of approval: it is more effective as communication, or more eloquent. Ragib's [4] is interesting because it appears to speak to *adab*, the process by which one learns the right things to say and the right times at which to say them. The multiple interpretations available in an oblique expression are particularly valuable because one can have a single quotation in one's head with the potential to make it fit any number of situations. Straightforward language is less malleable to context and therefore less useful.

How can we tally these principles with Ragib's oft-stated division of language into that which is clear and that which is unclear? As we have seen above, Ragib distinguished between clear and unclear language by defining polysemic language as unclear while clear language was made up of simple statements such as "thanks be to God" or "praise God".[459] Now it seems that language that can be interpreted in more than one way is in fact more effective communication than simple straightforward language.

Ragib squares this circle with the analogy. The analogy (*al-maṯal*) is not simple language and it is not straightforward. In analogy, the basic correspondence between expression and idea that is enshrined in coinage by fiat is broken down and the expressions consequently become polysemic; they come to refer to a different set of ideas:

Should someone ask you 'what is the use of switching to an analogy?' You should reply: the analogy is the most noble form of expression because of the quality of the comparison,

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[459] ———, "Methodological Introduction ed. Nāhī," 84-85; ———, *Methodological Introduction and Exegesis ed. Farḥāt*, 35-36.

syntactic composition, and brevity therein.[460] With regard to ideas, it is the most noble because it denotes both that which is intended and that with which the intended meaning combines. Its reference is universal rather than partial, and it refers obliquely rather than straightforwardly. There is a subtlety in oblique communication, and it is the most noble level that speakers can attain.[461]

The most important point here is that the analogy is powerful because it does two things at once. The expression refers to two ideas at the same time, and these two ideas are connected to each other. This is one example of what Ragib meant when he wrote in his ethics that the best communication has multiple aspects (in the quotation above this was [4]).

Ragib goes on to say that the analogy is the language used by the wise (al-ḥukamāʾ), that Arabic as a language is particularly replete with analogy, that only the elite are qualified to deconstruct and identify all the analogies, and that God honoured the community by revealing the Quran in language equally replete. Later on he gives the example of Quranic descriptions of paradise:

Generally, most of the circumstances of the day of resurrection are described in the Quran by way of analogy, for example Quran 47:15 (Muḥammad): 'the *maṯal* of the paradise that

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[460] In his poetics, which will be discussed in more detail in the subsequent chapter, Ragib deals with *maṯal* only briefly under the heading *tamṯīl* (making a *maṯal*), which is one of the types of brevity. Brevity occurs when there is more idea than expression, i.e. when an expression communicates a disproportionate amount of idea. ———. *Innovative Figures of Speech*. ff.16a-b. This was a standard understanding of *tamṯīl* in the ninth and tenth centuries, see: Wolfhart Heinrichs, "Early Ornate Prose and the Rhetorization of Poetry in Arabic Literature," in *Literary and Philosophical Rhetoric in the Greek, Roman, Syriac and Arabic Worlds*, ed. Frédérique Woerther (Hildesheim: Georg Olms, 2009), 227-228; Qudāmah b. Ǧaʿfar, *Naqd*, 90. Wansbrough describes "the Quranic *mathal* [as] … primarily an extended similie" in his perceptive synchronic analysis of rhetoric and allegory in exegesis. John Wansborough, *Quranic Studies: sources and methods of scriptural interpretation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977). 227-246, 239.

[461] *fa-in qīla fa-mā –l-fāʾidatu fī-l-ʿudūli ilā –l-maṯali qīla –l-maṯalu ašrafu lafẓan li-mā fīhi min aṣ-ṣīgati fī ḥusni –t-tašbīhi wa-n-naẓmi wa-ḫtiṣāri –l-lafẓi wa-ašrafu maʿnan li-dalālatihī ʿalā –l-maqṣūdi ilayhi wa-ʿalā ġayrihī mimmā yušārikuhū fa-dalālatuhū dalālatun kullīyatun lā ǧuzʾīyatun wa-taʿrīḍun lā taṣrīḥun wa-fī-t-taʿrīḍi talaṭṭufun wa-huwa ašrafu manzilatin li-l-muḫāṭibīn.* Ragib, *On Creeds*, 183.

the pious are promised is that it has in it rivers of pure water'. This means that the analogy for paradise is a garden in which are rivers.[462]

Ragib uses analogy to deal with those verses in the Quran that describe God in anthropomorphic terminology and mention the things he does with his hands, or the throne on which he sits. Ragib takes what we might call a figurative approach to such verses. This is what we mean when we say that a piece of language is figurative, or that it should be taken figuratively rather than literally. Ragib writes that the words "God's hands are outspread" in Quran 5:64 mean that God's blessing is continuous, and not that God actually has hands.[463] This is God "using comparison and *istiʿārah* in the same way as the Bedouin Arabs did".[464]

The difference between the way we use the phrase "figurative" today and the way that Ragib understood the analogy is that today we might tend to assume that if something is figurative it is not real. For Ragib this was not the case: an analogy may involve manipulations of the relationship between expression and idea that was enshrined in coinage by fiat and recorded in the lexicon, and this manipulation may be described as a deviation from that literal meaning, but he is not making an ontological claim that everything God communicates through the analogy is unreal.

Instead, the reason that God used analogy is that the lexicon cannot cope with his divinity. Human beings use the expressions in circulation that have been fixed by coinage to a limited

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[462] *anna ʿāmmata aḥwāli –l-qiyāmati maḏkūratun ʿalā ṭarīqati –l-maṯali ka-mā qāla taʿālā maṯalu –l-ğannati –llatī wuʿida –l-muttaqūna fīhā anhārun min māʾin ġayri āsinin ay maṯalu –l-ğannati maṯalu ğannatin fīhā anhār.* Ibid., 193. Cf. ———, "Methodological Introduction ed. Nāhī," 99; ———, *Methodological Introduction and Exegesis ed. Farḥāt*, 58-59.

[463] ———, *Methodological Introduction and Exegesis ed. Farḥāt*, 40-41. ———, "Methodological Introduction ed. Nāhī," 87-88. ———, *Quranic Glossary*, 889-890. ———, *Exegesis ed. aš-Šidī*, 926. ———, *Exegesis ed. Sardār*, 393. See also notes 276f.

[464] *wa-tašbīhu –l-yadi ʿalā ṭarīqati kalāmi –l-ʿarabi fī –stiʿārati hāḏihi –l-lafẓ.* ———, *Exegesis ed. Sardār*, 393.

number of ideas. At the time of the Quran's revelation, these ideas had tended to be based on sensory experience, and it was therefore impossible for them to deal with the inconceivable divinity of, for example, paradise. This is why God turned to analogy.[465] Descriptions of heaven and hell in the Quran are analogies and allusions that could be misconstrued if taken literally. Those who have been trained in rhetorical figures such as *istiʿārah* will not make this mistake.[466]

There is a clear parallel between the way that Ragib explains the analogy and the way that he explains homonymy. Homonymy exists because there is an infinite amount of ideas and only a finite amount of expressions with which to describe them. Both God and humans deal with this mismatch by using expressions that communicate a disproportionate amount of ideas. These expressions are figurative, analogical, metaphorical, metonymic, and homonymous, and they refer to ranges of meaning. The analogy exists because sometimes God has no option but to use it to convey ideas the divine infinity of which is inacessible to humanity. His language is therefore made up of expressions that speak to multiple and multifarious ideas.

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[465] *kānat -l-alfāẓu –l-mutadāwilatu mawḍūʿatan li-maʿānin maqṣūratin.* ———, *On Creeds*, 186-187.

[466] *wa-hāḏihī kulluhā išārātun wa-tamṯīlātun fa-lā tunāfī … wa-hāḏā ẓāhirun li-man tadarraba minhu fī bābi –l-balāġāti wa-l-istiʿārāt.* Ibid., 241-242.

4. RAGIB'S PHILOSOPHY OF LANGUAGE IN PRACTICE

Ragib once wrote that there were three types of knowledge. Knowledge was connected to either expressions, or to expressions and ideas, or just to ideas. The knowledge that was connected to expressions dealt either with the the essences of expressions, in which case it was lexicography, or it dealt with their attributes (*lawāḥiq*), in which case it comprised etymology, syntax, morphology, prosody, and rhyme. Ideas remained necessary intermediaries (*wasāʾiṭ*) in all these cases. The type of knowledge that was connected to both expressions and ideas was knowledge of certain proofs, dialectics and debate, oratory, effective communication, and poetry. The knowledge that had to do with ideas alone was either theoretical, "in which the only aim is knowledge", or practical, "in which it is necessary to know and then act". Theoretical knowledge ranged from theology to physics and medicine via "knowledge of the reason and of the soul", and practical knowledge ranged across ethics and religious ordinances.[467]

All but one of the four shibboleths of mediaeval Islamic intellectual culture that I will examine in this chapter (God's attributes, compulsion and free will, poetics, and figurative

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[467] Paraphrase of:

> *anwāʿu –l-ʿilmi ṯalāṯatun nawʿun yataʿallaqu bi-l-lafẓi wa-nawʿun yataʿallaqu bi-l-lafẓi wa-l-maʿnā wa-nawʿun yataʿallaqu bi-l-maʿnā dūna –l-lafẓi fa-ammā mā yataʿallaqu bi-l-lafẓi fa-huwa mā yuqṣadu bihī taḥṣīlu –l-alfāẓi bi-wasāʾiṭi –l-maʿānī wa-ḏālika ḍarbayni aḥaduhmā ḥukmu ḏawāti –l-alfāẓi wa-huwa ʿilmu –l-luġati wa-ṯ-ṯānī ḥukmu lawāḥiqi –l-alfāẓi wa-ḏālika šayʾāni šayʾun yaštariku fīhi –n-naẓmu wa-n-naṯru wa-huwa ʿilmu –l-ištiqāqi wa- ʿilmu –n-naḥwi wa-ʿilmu –t-taṣrīfi wa-šayʾun yaḫtaṣṣu bihī –n-naẓmu wa-huwa ʿilmu –l-ʿarūḍi wa- ʿilmu –l-qawāfī wa-ammā –n-nawʿu –l-mutaʿallaqu bil-lafẓi wa-l-maʿnā fa-ḫamsatu aḍrubin ʿilmu –l-barāhīna wa- ʿilmu –l-ǧidāli wa-ʿilmu –l-ḫiṭābati wa-ʿilmu –l-balāġati wa-ʿilmu –š-ši ʿri wa-ammā –n-nawʿu –l-mutaʿallaqu bi-l-maʿnā fa-ḍarbāni ʿilmīyun wa-ʿamalīyun fa-l-ʿilmīyu mā quṣida bihī an yaʿlama faqaṭ wa-ḏālika maʿrifatu –l-bārī taʿālā wa-maʿrifatu –n-nubūwati wa-maʿrifatu –l-malāʾikati wa-maʿrifatu yawmi –l-qiyāmati wa-maʿrifatu –l- ʿaqli wa-maʿrifatu –n-nafsi wa-maʿrifatu mabādiʾi –l-umūri wa-maʿrifatu –l-arkāni wa-maʿrifatu –l-āṯāri –l- ʿulwīyati min –l-falaki wa-n-nayyirayni wa-n-nuǧūmi wa-maʿrifatu ṭabāʾiʿi –n-nabāti wa-yuqālu lahū ʿilmu –l-falāḥati wa-maʿrifatu ṭabāʾiʿi –l-ḥayawānāti wa-maʿrifatu ṭabāʾiʿi –l-insāni wa-yuqālu ʿilmu -ṭ-ṭibb wa-l-ʿamalīyu wa-huwa mā yaǧību an yuʿlama ṯumma yuʿmalu bihī wa-yusammā tāratan –s-sunana wa-s-siyāsāta wa-tāratan –š-šarīʿata wa-tāratan aḥkāma –š-šarīʿati wa-makārimahū wa-ḏālika ḥukmu –l- ʿibādāti wa-ḥukmu –l-muʿāmalāti wa-ḥukmu –l-maṭāʿimi wa-ḥukmu –l-manākiḥi wa-ḥukmu –l-mazāǧir.*

——, *The Path to the Nobilities*, 169-170.

readings of the Quran) are, in this epistemology, connected to ideas alone.[468] Only poetics is

explicitly understood as knowledge of the interaction of expressions with ideas. However, it will

become appararent in the sections that follow that even when Ragib is dealing with an "ideas

only" topic, he uses linguistic analyses to explain it, in just the same way as he recognises that

knowledge connected to expressions cannot be stripped of all connection to ideas. What is more,

it will also become apparent that, just as in the epistemology paraphrased above, Ragib loves to

return to the pairing of expression and idea in order to explain almost anything. Language, the

force that connects expressions and ideas, is at the heart of everything.

Compulsion and Free Will

Compulsion and free will were already an established source of theological debate in the

ninth century when Ibn Qutaybah discussed the questions of whether the adherents of these two

doctrines were indeed referred to in Prophetic Hadith,[469] and what they should be called. As

tended to be the case, adherents were named by their opponents; those who believed in free will

were called *al-qadarīyah*, while those who believed that God compelled all outcomes were

called *al-ǧabrīyah*. This despite the fact that both these words in Arabic mean almost the same

thing: God's predestination (*qadar*) or compulsion (*ǧabr*). Ibn Qutaybah reported that it had

consequently been suggested that "the *ǧabrīyah* are the *qadarīyah*" but he then acerbically noted

that were this to be the case then there would be no need for the name *ǧabrīyah*, and furthermore

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[468] I have addressed Ragib's discussions of another shibboleth of mediaeval Islamic intellectual culture, Quranic inimitability (*iʿǧāz*), elsewhere: Key, "Language and Literature."

[469] He concluded that while the Prophet did say "the *qadarīyah* are the Magians of this community…", references to the *ǧabrīyah*, *rāfiḍah*, *murǧīʿah*, or *ḫawāriǧ* came from early sources other than the Prophet. Abū Muḥammad ʿAbdallāh Ibn Qutaybah, *Taʾwīl Muḫtalif al-Ḥadīṯ*, ed. Muḥammad Muḥyī ad-Dīn al-Aṣfar (Beirut: al-Maktab al-Islāmī, 1999). 136.

"names just fall into place and [the names of sects] only adhere to their adherents".[470] By the time al-Ašʿarī was enumerating the various schools of thought in the mid-tenth century, the names had stuck.[471]

The importance of the act of naming should come as no surprise, but there is a substantial theological and ethical issue at stake here. If God is all-powerful and aware of everything that has happened and will happen, then he must know what people are going to do. If this is the case, then how can humans have any free will to choose to obey or disobey him? If humans lack free will, then what are their motivations for following God's instructions?

Ragib's answer is that God compels humans to act as they do, but gives them the impression that they are acting of their own free will.[472] He explains that the *ǧabrīyah* believe that humans are wholly incapable of those acts that they are preordained not to carry out, while the *qadarīyah* believe both that humans are capable of acts they are preordained not to carry out, and that those things could in fact happen despite God knowing they will not. Another group, known as the *mufawwiḍah* (having full power), believe that humans do what they want and obey orders, or not, as they choose. For Ragib, the correct position is to avoid both these extremes and say that "there is neither compulsion nor free will".[473]

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[470] *wa-qad yaḥmilu baʿḍuhum –l-ḥimyata ʿalā an yaqūla –l-ǧabrīyatu hum –l-qadarīyah … wa-l-asmāʾu lā taqaʿu ġayra mawāqiʿihā wa-lā talzamu illā ahlahā*. Ibid., 137.

[471] al-Ašʿarī, *Maqālāt*, 430. Although the discussion about the counter-intuitive nature of the names was still going on: ———, *The Theology*, 74-75.

[472] "God created man as compelled to act, [but] in the form of being free to choose" (*wa-ǧaʿalahū muǧbaran fī ṣūratin muḫayyar*). Ragib, *Quranic Glossary*, 184-185. Cf. ———, *On Creeds*, 28-29.

[473] *lā ǧabra wa-lā tafwīḍ*. ———, *On Creeds*, 282.

In al-Ašʿarī's heresiography, this phrase was understood as a Shia formulation,[474] and Ragib's contemporary al-Ābī (Abū Saʿd Manṣūr, d. 421/1030) attributes it to the Shia Imam Ǧaʿfar aṣ-Ṣādiq (Abū ʿAbdallāh b. Muḥammad Bāqir, sixth Imam of the Twelver Shia, d. 148/765).[475] Nevertheless, Ragib justifies this formulation at length. There cannot be any compulsion because that would render irrelevant the reason, thought, and contemplation with which God endowed humans so that they could distinguish between real and false beliefs, true and untrue speech, and good and bad actions, and choose the real, the true, and the good in order to become his vicegerents on earth. "For God to create human reason, the most noble thing that exists, and then render it irrelevant would be repugnant". Furthermore, if humans did not act then it would make no sense for their reason to query, as it does, the motivations for their actions.[476]

Human reason therefore stands at the heart of Ragib's beliefs about free will and predestination. Alongside it stand his belief in God's wisdom, which can be trusted and is the guiding principle behind all preordained acts and events, and his belief that human passivity is

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[474] "A second group of the Shia (ar-rāfiḍah) claim that there is no compulsion, as al-Ǧahmī said (according to al-Ašʿarī: Ǧahm b. Ṣafwān, d. 128/745, see: al-Ašʿarī, Maqālāt, 279-280.), and no free will, as the Muʿtazilah said…" ibid., 41.

[475] Al-Ābī reports that ʿAlī b. Mūsā ar-Riḍā (Abū al-Ḥasan, eighth Imam of the Twelver Shia, d. 203/818) was asked about the meaning of the statement of Ǧaʿfar aṣ-Ṣādiq that "there is no compulsion nor free will; [it should be] a matter between two matters" (lā ǧabra wa-lā tafwīḍa amrun bayna amrayn). ʿAlī ar-Riḍā replied:
> whoever claims that it is God who does our actions (anna –llāha yafʿalu afaʿālanā) and then punishes us for them has spoken according to the doctrine of compulsion. Whoever claims that God delegated the affair[s] of creation and blessing to his creation (anna –llāha fawwaḍa amra –l-ḫalqi wa-r-rizqi ilā ḫalqihī) has spoken according to the doctrine of free will (bi-t-tafwīḍ). The adherent of the doctrine of compulsion is an unbeliever (kāfir), and the adherent of the doctrine of free will is a polytheist (mušrik).

Upon being subsequently asked the nature of the correct middle position, ʿAlī ar-Riḍā said: "it is finding the path to doing what one is ordered and not doing what one is forbidden" (wuǧūdu –s-sabīli ilā ityāni mā umirū bihī wa-tarki mā nuhū ʿanhu). Abū Saʿd Manṣūr b. al-Ḥusayn al-Ābī, Naṯr ad-Durr, ed. Muḥammad ʿAlī Qurnah, ʿAlī Muḥammad al-Baġāwī, Ḥusayn Naṣṣār, Muḥammad Ibrāhīm ʿAbd ar-Raḥmān, and Sayyidah Ḥāmid ʿAbd al-ʿĀl, 8 vols. (Cairo: al-Hayʾah al-ʿĀmmah li-l-Kitāb, 1981-1991). 1:363-364. This formulation is also attributed to Ǧaʿfar aṣ-Ṣādiq in: aš-Šahrastānī, al-Milal wa-n-Niḥal, 1:195.

[476] …wa-qabīḥun an yūǧida –llāhu taʿālā –l-ʿaqla –llaḏī huwa ašrafu mawǧūdin ṯumma yabṭulu fāʾidatahū… Ragib, On Creeds, 282.

not an option. Ragib's ethical principles do not allow him to countenance a human refusal to use reason to try and do the right thing, and he quotes the Quran: "humans will have nothing but that for which they strive".[477]

In the methodological introduction to his *Exegesis*, Ragib explains his beliefs about free will and predestination by deconstructing the language in which they are couched. In doing so, he addresses another critical dimension of the theological debate around compulsion and free will: the question of whether human actions are attributable to God, or to the human actors themselves. Ragib makes the argument that an expression denoting an action (*fiʿl*) can refer to two different actors (*fāʿilān*) according to different perspectives (*naẓarān*).[478] As is so often the case, the evidence is a line of poetry, which in this case most likely comes from the pre-Islamic period:

[Camels] given to us by our ancestor, by the god, and by the harsh chopping blow.[479] Ragib explains that the verb "given to us" has three agents: the first cause (God), the immediate cause (the blow), and the intermediary (the ancestor). All actions can be looked at in two ways. On the one hand the human being is the immediate actor (*mubāšir*), while on the other hand God is the first cause. Ragib argues that this duality is reflected in the Quran, which states in different

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[477] Quran 53:39 (an-Naǧm): *wa-an laysa li-l-insāni illā mā saʿā*. Ibid., 282-283.

[478] The title of the chapter in which he does so is: "explanation of the aspects that determine a noun's expression as an agent" (*faṣlun fī tabyini –l-wuǧūhi –llatī yuǧʿalu li-aǧlihā –l-ismu fāʿilan fī-l-lafẓ*). ———, "Methodological Introduction ed. Nāhī," 101f; ———, *Methodological Introduction and Exegesis ed. Farḥāt*, 63f. Large sections of the text are repeated in: ———, *The Path to the Nobilites*, 297f.

[479] *ḥabānā bihī ġaddunā wa-l-ilāhu / wa-ḍarbun lanā ǧaḏimun ṣāʾibun* [*al-mutaqārib*]. ———, "Methodological Introduction ed. Nāhī," 102; ———, *Methodological Introduction and Exegesis ed. Farḥāt*, 63. *ḥabānā bihā ġaddunā wa-l-ilāhu / wa-ḍarbun lanā aǧḏamu ṣārimun*. ———, *The Path to the Nobilites*, 297. The poet is Ḥazāz b. ʿAmr from the tribe of ʿAbd Manāf. According to the editors of both the *Mubhiǧ* and the *Ḥamāsah*, he is pre-Islamic and to be identified with Ḥarrān b. ʿAmr b. ʿAbd Manāh, who appears elsewhere in the *Ḥamāsah*. Abū Fatḥ ʿUṯmān Ibn Ǧinnī, *al-Mubhiǧ fī Tafsīr Asmāʾ Šuʿarāʾ al-Ḥamāsah*, ed. Marwān al-ʿAṭīyah and Šayḫ ar-Rāšid (Beirut: Dār al-Hiǧrah, 1988). 170-171; Abū ʿAlī al-Iṣfahānī al-Marzūqī and Ḥabīb b. Aws aṭ-Ṭāʾī Abū Tammām, *Šarḥ Dīwān al-Ḥamāsah*, ed. Aḥmad Amīn and ʿAbd as-Salām Muḥammad Hārūn, 4 vols. (Beirut: Dār al-Ǧīl, 1991). 1017, 1671.

verses that on the one hand God, and on the other hand the angel of death, take souls when they die. Ragib also reads the Quranic reference to God's assistance to the Muslims in their first major military victory in 2/624 as referring to a general truth about all human action: "you did not kill them, it was God that killed them, and when you threw [stones at them (according to the exegetical tradition)], you did not throw, but rather it was God that threw".[480]

Ragib's conclusion is that God is the only real actor and everyone else is only an actor "by semantic extension".[481] In other words, the fiat coinage connection between the expression "actor" and the idea of acting only remains fixed when it is God that is being described, and in all other cases the relationship between the expression and the idea behind is manipulated and extended. This can lead to ambiguity, for example when the *ğabrīyah* say "actor" and intend "immediate actor" (humans) while the *qadarīyah* say "actor" and mean "first cause" (God).[482]

Having established the principle of semantic extension with regard to actions, Ragib goes on to claim that it had been an operative assumption throughout both the revelation itself and the work of the early generations of Muslim scholars.[483] Ragib's claim is that everyone always shared the assumption that an expression denoting an action could refer to two different actors according to different perspectives, and that human actions could therefore remain human and be

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[480] Quran 8:17 (al-Anfāl): *fa-lam taqtulūhum walākinna –llāhu qatalahum wa-mā ramayta iḏ ramayta walākinna –llāhu ramā*. Ragib, "Methodological Introduction ed. Nāhī," 103; ———, *Methodological Introduction and Exegesis ed. Farḥāt*, 67. Ragib was by no means the first exegete to make similar use of this verse, see for example: Muḥammad b. Ğarīr aṭ-Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr aṭ-Ṭabarī: Ğāmiʿ al-Bayān ʿan Taʾwīl Āy al-Qurʾān*, ed. ʿAbdallāh b. ʿAbd al-Muḥsin at-Turkī, 26 vols. (Riyad: Dār ʿĀlam al-Kutub, 2003). 11:82-83f.

[481] *fa-huwa –l-fāʿilu –l-ḥaqīqīyu wa-mā siwāhu fāʿilun ʿalā ḍarbin min at-tawassuʿ*. Ragib, "Methodological Introduction ed. Nāhī," 104; ———, *Methodological Introduction and Exegesis ed. Farḥāt*, 67. See also notes 249f.

[482] ———, "Methodological Introduction ed. Nāhī," 87; ———, *Methodological Introduction and Exegesis ed. Farḥāt*, 40.

[483] *wa-bi-hāḏihī –n-naẓri warada –š-šarʿu wa-ağmaʿu -ṣ-ṣadri –l-awwali min –l-muʾminīna…* ———, "Methodological Introduction ed. Nāhī," 104; ———, *Methodological Introduction and Exegesis ed. Farḥāt*, 67.

attributable to God at the same time. This is why "there is neither compulsion nor free will".

Compulsion requires that human actions are attributable to God alone, and free will requires that

they are attributable only to humans. Ragib's linguistic principle is a polysemic mean: the

expression "act" refers to multiple agents, neither of which can be the sole agent. The connection

by fiat coinage may be between the expression "agent" and the idea of God's agency, but the

subsequent connections by semantic extension between the expression "agent" and ideas of

human agency are also fully linguistically operational.[484]

Ragib ends the chapter with the observation that this principle applies whenever language

confronts divinity. He writes that the early generations of Muslim scholars used the expression

"thing" to describe both God and his creation, again "according to two different perspectives"

(*bi-naẓarayni muḫtalifayn*).[485] Furthermore, he remarks that this polysemic principle, in which

one expression can refer to two different ideas according to perspective, is a fact of the language

itself. This is because the Arabic verbal noun (*al-maṣdar*) can be used to refer to both an active

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[484] Ragib does not take us through this line of reasoning with the level of detail I have provided in these two sentences. Instead, he states the relevance of this chapter (titled "explanation of the aspects that determine a noun's expression as an agent", see note 478) to the question of free will and predestination in its first sentence (*wa-huwa faṣlun taktu̱ru –š-šubahu li-ağlihī wa-yataʿallaqu bihī –l-farīqāni –l-mansūbāni ilā –l-ğabri wa-l-qadar*), and explains later that the chapter erases the doubt that comes from thinking that actions are only attributable to either God or to humans, and not to both at the same time (*wa-bi-taṣawwuri hāḏā –l-faṣli yazūlu –š-šubahu fīmā yurā min –l-afʿāli mansūban ilā –llāhi taʿālā manfiyan ʿan –l-ʿabdi wa-mansūban ilā –l-ʿabdi tāratan manfiyan ʿan –llāhi taʿālā*). ———, "Methodological Introduction ed. Nāhī," 101, 103; ———, *Methodological Introduction and Exegesis ed. Farḥāt*, 63, 65.

[485] The question of whether the word *šayʾ* could be used to describe God was indeed a subject of theological discussion, but I have been unable to find anyone making Ragib's point about the *maṣdar* or polysemy (for which see page 159). See: al-Ašʿarī, *Maqālāt*, 181; Faḫr ad-Dīn ar-Rāzī, *Mafātīḥ*, 1:123-125, 12:186-188; Ibn Fūrak, *Maqālāt ed. as-Sāyiḥ*, 43; Abū Manṣūr Muḥammad al-Māturīdī, *Kitāb at-Tawḥīd*, ed. Bekir Topaloğlu and Muhammed Aruçı (Istanbul / Beirut: Irşhad Kitap Yayin Dağitim / Dār Ṣādir, 2001). 104-107. Al-Māturīdī, Ibn Fūrak, and Faḫr ad-Dīn agree with Ragib that *šayʾ* is a legitimate expression to use for God, and Faḫr ad-Dīn ascribes opposition to this position to Ğahm b. Ṣafwān (d. 128/745), a historical figure who nevertheless often occupies an almost apocryphal role in theological discussions. Faḫr ad-Dīn also makes the pertinent observation that this is a theological debate on the level of expressions, not ideas: God is definitely a thing, the question is just whether or not to call him one (*fa-hāḏā nizāʿun fī muğarradi –l-lafẓi lā fī-l-maʿnā*). Faḫr ad-Dīn ar-Rāzī, *Mafātīḥ*, 1:125.

agent (*al-fāʿil*) and a passive recipient (*al-mafʿūl*), and "conceiving of this actuality behind the expression 'thing' is something that reminds us that this language is from God".[486] Polysemy is not just an explanatory tool, or a linguistic assumption. It is a linguistic structure so productive and effective that it constitutes evidence of intelligent design.

Attributes

God's attributes may well be the most important subject in Islamic theology. From at least the eighth century onwards, scholars had engaged in a prolonged dialectical attempt to understand what God was. Uniquely among the religions of the mediaeval Middle East, these Muslim scholars had a scripture that they believed was God's actual word, right down to the vowels and the grammar, scarcely corrupted by its passage through mortal hands. Less uniquely, many of them developed a commitment to the interpretative and analytical power of their own reason, and thus one could easily read the history of Islamic theology as a long, multifarious interaction between reason and revelation. This is certainly true in the case of Ragib, as we will see below.

The fixed corpus of Islamic scripture was unable to answer all the questions about God that were posed over the centuries across a febrile theological landscape in which many of the key questions about the nature of God had already been asked, and answered, in other religious traditions (most notably Christianity, Neoplatonism, and combinations thereof). The Quran, and to a much lesser extent the Hadith,[487] told believers that God knew, was powerful, sat on a

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[486] *wa-taṣawwuru hāḏihī –l-ḥaqīqati min lafẓati –š-šayʾi mimmā yunabbihunā anna hāḏihī –l-luġati min ğihati – llāhi taʿālā*. Ragib, "Methodological Introduction ed. Nāhī," 104; ———, *Methodological Introduction and Exegesis ed. Farḥāt*, 67.

[487] See, for example, note 253.

throne, and had hands. The fact they these were God's own words and not the words of humans describing him meant that Muslim scholars had to give the words substantial epistemological weight, regardless of where those scholars stood on the primacy of revelation or reason.

Harry Austryn Wolfson made the critically important point that the problem of the attributes is both ontological and semantic.[488] It is ontological in the sense that scholars sought to understand the actual nature of God (physical or not) and whether the existence of, for example, God's knowledge alongside him implied that he was made up of more than one thing. It is semantic in the sense that scholars sought to understand on the one hand how God could be both wholly unlike his creation and at the same time describe himself with words that he also used to describe them, and on the other hand how they themselves could then go on to describe God using the language they shared with him.[489]

For Ragib, unsuprisingly, the problem was largely semantic. In his *Quranic Glossary*, he reads God's Quranic phrase: "the lord of glory, above that which they describe" as being: "a warning that most of his attributes are not as they are believed to be by most people, and cannot be conceived of by way of analogy or comparison".[490] This admission of the limits of language, however polysemic, to deal with the *ontological* reality of God is reflected at the start of *On Creeds*, where the first two of the seven beliefs that define Sunni faith address the attributes. Ragib's first principle of Sunni belief is that God is one, unlike anything else that exists, and all

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[488] Wolfson, *Philosophy*, 205.

[489] Ibid., 207. My assertion that God and humanity shared the language does not come from Wolfson. See references at note 452.

[490] *qawluḥu ʿazza wa-ǧalla rabbi –l-ʿizzati ʿammā yaṣifūn* [Quran 37:180 (aṣ-Ṣaffāt)] *tanbīhun ʿalā anna akṯara ṣifātihī laysa ʿalā ḥasabi mā yaʿtaqiduhū kaṯīrun min -n-nāsi lam yutaṣawwar ʿanhu tamṯīlun wa-tašbīhun wa-annahū yataʿālā ammā yaqūlu –l-kuffār*. Ragib, *Quranic Glossary*, 873. Only the final phrase ("and that God is above that which the unbelievers say" is the standard interpretation of the verse in the exegetical tradition. See, for example: aṭ-Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr*, 19:661.

that he shares with others are "some of his names, such as 'knowing' and 'powerful', with regard

to the expression, not the idea".[491] Language is therefore the only thing that connects humanity to

the divine and it does so only on the level of expressions. Second, Sunnis must:

> believe that God is alive, knowing, powerful, hearing, seeing, and the other attributes for
> which there is precedent in the revelation and upon which the community agrees.
> Furthermore, that he has knowledge, power, and sight that cannot be apprehended by the
> senses. Sunnis must also abandon investigation into the idea behind his attributes unless
> that investigation was already carried out by our forefathers. They must not engage in
> theological discussions about whether descriptions of God are themselves eternal or
> temporal, whether they are God or something other than God, or not God and not
> something other than God, for that is all heresy and engagement with that which the
> Prophet's Companions and the generation after them left aside; it is the blasphemy with
> regard to God's names that God mentioned in the Quran: 'throw off those who blaspheme
> with regard to his names'.[492]

This position is consistent with Ragib's tendency to disparage and caricature theological

argumentation. However, later in the same work he will engage in a prolonged theological

discussion of the problem of the attributes. How can we explain this apparent contradiction?

Perhaps the answer lies in Wolfson's distinction between the ontological and semantic aspects of

the problem, and Ragib's intellectual distaste is in fact for ontological speculation about God's

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[491] *awwalan anna –llāha ʿazza wa-ğalla wāḥidun lā yušbihuhū šayʾun min –l-mawğūdāti wa-lā yušārikuhū bi-waǧhin illā fī baʿḍi asmāʾihī lafẓan lā maʿnan naḥwu ʿālimin wa-qādir.* Ragib, *On Creeds*, 28.

[492] The text reads:
> *aṯ-ṯānī an yaʿtaqida fī ṣifātihī annahū ḥayyun ʿālimun qādirun samīʿun baṣīrun ilā ġayri ḏālika min aṣ-ṣifāti –llatī warada bihī –š-šarʿu wa-ğtamaʿat ʿalayhi –l-ummatu wa-anna lahū ʿilman wa-qudratan wa-baṣaran lā ʿalā –l-waǧhi –l-maḥsūsi wa-yatruka –l-baḥṯa ʿan maʿnā ṣifātihī siwā mā warada ʿan –s-salafi wa-yatruka –l-kalāma fī waṣfihā annahā qadīmatun aw muḥdaṯatun wa-hal hiya huwa aw ġayruhū aw lā hiya huwa wa-lā ġayruhū* [following ———. *Chester Beatty AR 5277.* f.5b. Apparently corrupt alternatives are: *wa-hal hiya huwa aw ġayruhū wa-lā huwa huwa wa-lā ġayruhū.* ———. *Feyzullah Efendi 2141.* f.28b. And: *wa-hal huwa aw ġayruhū wa-lā huwa wa-lā ġayruhū.* ———. *Sehid Ali 382.* f.19a.] *fa-inna ḏālika kulluhū bidʿatun wa-ḫawḍun fīmā amsaka ʿanhu -ṣ-ṣaḥābatu wa-t-tābiʿūna bal ilḥādun fī asmāʾihī –l-maḏkūrati fī qawlihī wa-ḏarū –llaḏīna yulḥidūna fī asmāʾihī* [Quran 7:180].
———, *On Creeds*, 28. Cf. Ibid., 270.

attributes: the question of whether the attributes actually constitute part of God or are separate from him is heretical innovation.[493] On the contrary, the semantic question about what God said and what humans can and should say about him is a valid one. Ragib engages with it in depth, and I will record his discussion of the attributes in detail because it shows how language lay at the centre of his understanding of perhaps the most important problem in Islamic theology. What follows is an explanatory and greatly abbreviated paraphrase of the discussion, including a number of direct quotations that are represented as such:

> Ragib starts with an explanation of the concept of similarity (*mumāṯalah*) in order to establish that there is no similarity between God and humanity. Bearing in mind that God shares nothing with any part of his creation, it is better for us not to refer to him with our 'tongues of flesh', in order to avoid describing him as having human characteristics.[494] The only reason we do so is because God, through the Prophet, mercifully permitted us to do so.

> There are two types of attributes: those that hold God aloof (*munazzihah*) and those that praise him (*mumaǧǧidah*).[495] The attributes that hold God aloof can then be subdivided into those that do so through both expression and idea, and those that do so only through the idea. For example, while the Quranic verses 'neither begetting nor begotten' and 'taken neither by light nor heavy sleep' are made up of expressions that communicate ideas that describe God negatively, the idea of oneness (*aḥad*) on its own denies any duality to God 'even if the expression establishes it'.[496]

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[493] Wolfson, although he had not read Ragib, agreed: "[n]o basis for this problem is to be found in the Koran. It originated under the influence of the Christian doctrine of the Trinity…". Wolfson, *Philosophy*, 206.

[494] *…an nunazziha –llāha ʿazza wa-ǧalla ʿan an naḏkurahū bi-l-alsinati –l-laḥmīyati faḍlan ʿan an naṣifahū bi-ṣ-ṣifāti –l-bašarīyah*. Ragib, *On Creeds*, 75. Cf. Ibid., 270.

[495] Ibid., 75-76. I have not found this division of the attributes outside Ragib's work. The more usual division at his time was between attributes of God's essence (*ḏāt*) and attributes of his actions (*afʿāl*). See: al-Bāqillānī, *al-Inṣāf*, 25; Ibn Fūrak, *Maqālāt ed. as-Sāyiḥ*, 48.

[496] Quran 112:3 (al-Iḫlāṣ) and Quran 2:255. *wa-ḍarbun fī-l-maʿnā dūna –l-lafẓi ka-qawlihī lanā aḥadun –llaḏī yufīdu nafīya –l-uṯnawīyati wa-in kāna lafẓuhū iṯbātan*. Ragib, *On Creeds*, 76.

What Ragib is saying here is that there are cases in which the idea overrides the expression. Some of the ideas behind the language of revelation are so central to the conception of God that they must be adhered to even if the revelation also contains expressions that contradict them. The Quran makes the ontological claim that God is one, and this overrides any semantic questions about how this claim is expressed.[497]

> Ragib continues with the argument that the attributes that hold God aloof are superior to those that praise him, in large part because human knowledge of God is necessarily so limited and imperfect that we can more accurately say what God is not than what he is. While attributes that praise God, on the other hand, inevitably associate him with descriptions that also apply to humans, and are consequently problematic. It is for this reason that the 112th Sura of the Quran, al-Iḫlāṣ, despite being only seventeen words long, is held to be equivalent to a third of the Quran. Its second two verses state negative attributes ('neither begetting nor begotten, with none comparable to him'), and its first two verses ('say: he is God the one, God the eternal source'), 'while their form is positive, are in reality negative because oneness negates duality and multiplicity, and being an eternal source is a negation of any need for food, drink, limbs, and tools…'.[498] Precedent is the only reason that we use positive attributes that praise God. It is precedent that leads us to reject the position of some philosophers (ṣinfun min –l-falāsifah) that God should only be described negatively in order to avoid implying that God is composite or shares human characteristics. In fact, the philosophers themselves also use positive terminology to describe God, such as 'the pure that-ness' (an-annīyah al-maḥḍ) or 'the true he-ness' (al-huwīyah bi-l-ḥaqq),[499] but in doing so fall into the trap of positive description, and then by adding qualifers to those descriptions they fall into the trap of polytheism.

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[497] Cf. the discussion of figurative readings below (from *lafẓ* to *maʿnā* versus from *maʿnā* to *lafẓ*) at page 191.

[498] Quran 112:1-4: *qul huwa –llāhu aḥadun allāhu ṣamadun lam yalid wa-lam yūlad wa-lam yakun lahū kufūwan aḥad*. Ragib writes: *wa-anna lafẓata –l-aḥadi wa-ṣ-ṣamadi wa-in kānat bi-ṣūrati –l-iṯbāti fa-hiya fī –l-ḥaqīqati salbun wa-nafyun fa-inna –l-aḥadīyata nafyu –l-uṯnawīyati wa-l-kuṯrati wa-ṣ-ṣamadīyata nafyu –l-ḥāǧati ilā -ṭ-ṭaʿāmi wa-š-šarābi wa-l-aʿḍāʾi wa-l-ālāti*… Ragib, *On Creeds*, 78.

[499] For a discussion of these terms, see: Toby Mayer, "Anniyya," in *Encyclopaedia of Islam, THREE*, ed. Gudrun

The Muʿtazilah claimed that God could be described with any word that made sense according to human understanding,[500] whereas the traditionists (*ahl al-aṯar*) maintained that precedent was the only source that could legitimate a description, and that the precedent had to be either certain [with regard to its historical accuracy], or agreed upon by the community. These traditionists were aware that the names enumerated in divine precedent were accidents of quantity, quality, time, and place that if they had been arrived at independently by human reason would have led to false equations between God and humanity. Human reasoning was problematic, because even in the case of specialists (*ahl al-ḥaqāʾiq*) it could lead to well-motivated false attribution of good human qualities to God (*tašbīh*), or conversely false denial of qualities that are enshrined in revelation (*taʿṭīl*).[501]

Attributes that praise God can be divided into those that come in pairs, such as 'the first and the last',[502] and those that come singly and often at the end of Quranic verses, such as 'the wise', or 'the knowing'. They can also be divided into names (*ism*) and descriptions (*waṣf*), although all agree that 'God' is the only name, while the rest are descriptions.[503] Attributes can be restricted, such as 'God is the light of the heavens and earth',[504] which does not mean that God is just 'the light', or they can be reliant on accompanying expressions for context, such as 'they plotted, and we plotted', which does not mean that

Krämer, Denis Matringe, John Nawas, and Everett Rowson (Brill Online: Brill, 2011).

[500] This is an accurate epitome of the Muʿtazilī position. See, for example, al-Qāḍī ʿAbd al-Ǧabbār, who maintains that God can be described with those descriptions to which he is indeed entitled. Peters, *God's created speech*, 152-153, 250f; al-Qāḍī ʿAbd al-Ǧabbār, *al-Muġnī*, 7:53, 7:117.

[501] Ragib, *On Creeds*, 80. These specialists (*ahl al-ḥaqāʾiq*) are ill-defined. It often appears that Ragib understands the *ḥaqāʾiq* to be the accurate connections drawn between expressions and ideas, but in the absence of textual evidence this can only remain an inference. Ragib does, however, place the *ḥaqāʾiq* alongside the disciplines of divinely-provided knowledge (*ʿulūm al-mawhabah*) that the highest levels of humanity can access. ———, "On the Ordering of Intellectual Disciplines and of Worldly Actions," 220, 222. Cf. page 87.

[502] Quran 57:3: *huwa –l-awwalu wa-l-āḫiru wa-ẓ-ẓāhiru wa-l-bāṭinu wa-huwa bi-kulli šayʾin ʿalīm*. Ragib returns to this point in more detail in what follows. He notes that theologians analyse God as being the first and last in terms of him existing before anything else, and after everything has gone (this is an accurate representation of the position of, for example: Ibn Fūrak, *Maqālāt ed. as-Sāyiḥ*, 44.) Ragib raises the question of whether this reading implies that at the current time (i.e. neither before nor after) the verse is false, because creation is here and so is God. Ragib then answers this potential objection by clarifying that God simply intended (*qaṣada*) to highlight the amazing nature of his attributes and the fact that he is the source of all creation. Ragib, *On Creeds*, 90.

[503] This topic was in fact the subject of more debate than Ragib implies. See, for example: Peters, *God's created speech*, 251.

[504] Quran 24:35: *allāhu nūru –s-samāwāti wa-l-arḍ*.

God is an inveterate plotter.[505] Attributes can also be divided into those specific to God, such as 'the merciful', and homonymous attributes that God shares with others, which refer to quantity, quality, adjunction,[506] time, ownership, emotion, and place.

Next, Ragib expands on the difference between names and descriptions, and this leads him into discussion of the nature of name (*ism*), attribute (*ṣifah*), and description (*waṣf*):

'The name is an expression (*lafẓah*) that acts as a sign for an essence in order that listeners understand what they have heard. The attribute expresses (*ʿibārah ʿan*) a state that the essence is in.[507] The description is what the describer says when he says something is such-and-such. Furthermore, the expression (*lafẓah*) 'attribute' can be used in the place of 'description' and vice versa, as happens with measure, weight, number, and time.[508] The fiat coinage of 'name' is more general than that of 'attribute' because every attribute can be called a name, whereas not every name can be called an attribute'.[509]

Names are either proper names, or not. The proper name (*al-ʿalam*) is that which is not considered to have an idea behind it, but rather it is just a sign. For example, one does not

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[505] Quran 27:50 (an-Naml): *wa-makarū makran wa-makarnā makran*. This verse is part of the narrative in which God sends the prophet Ṣāliḥ to the people of Ṯamūd.

[506] *mā yadillu ʿalā iḍāfatin naḥwu –l-mawğūd*. The implication here appears to be that some attributes, such as existence, can be added or adjoined to God without the result being polytheism. Ragib, *On Creeds*, 82.

[507] This is a critical departure from the Ašʿarī position of al-Bāqillānī, who makes a distinction between the ontological *ṣifah*, which is a "real existent residing in God", and the semantic *waṣf*, which is a speech act. For Ragib, *ṣifah* is not an ontological fact but an expression of one, that itself is made up of an expression (*lafẓ*) and an idea (*maʿnā*). This is made clear by Ragib's reference in the next sentence to *lafẓatu -ṣ-ṣifati* (see note 509 below). Abū Bakr Muḥammad b. aṭ-Ṭayyib al-Bāqillānī, *Tamhīd al-Awāʾil fī Talḫīṣ ad-Dalāʾil*, ed. ʿImād ad-Dīn Aḥmad Ḥaydar (Beirut: Muʾassasat al-Kutub aṯ-Ṯaqāfīyah, 1987). 247, 250; Claude Gilliot, "Attributes of God," in *Encyclopaedia of Islam, THREE*, ed. Gudrun Krämer, Denis Matringe, John Nawas, and Everett Rowson (Brill Online: Brill, 2011).

[508] Another Ašʿarī, Ibn Fūrak, contradicts al-Baqillānī (see note 507) and makes the same point as Ragib, writing that al-Ašʿarī had said that there was no difference between the words *ṣifah* and *waṣf*. Ibn Fūrak also uses some of the same examples as Ragib (measure, weight, number, time). Ibn Fūrak, *Maqālāt ed. as-Sāyiḥ*, 38.

[509] *anna –l-sma lafẓatun ğuʿilat simatan li-ḏātin min –l-ḏawāti li-yafhama bihā –l-muḫāṭabu mā yulqā ilayhi wa-ṣ-ṣifatu ʿibāratun ʿan ḥālin min aḥwāli –ḏ-ḏāti wa-l-waṣfu qawlu –l-wāṣifi wa-huwa an yaqūla huwa kaḏā aw laysa bi-kaḏā wa-qad taḍaʿu lafẓata -ṣ-ṣifati mawḍaʿa –l-waṣfi wa-lafẓu –l-waṣfi mawḍaʿa -ṣ-ṣifati ka-z-zinati wa-l-wazni wa-l-ʿiddati wa-l-waʿdi wa-l-smu aʿammu fī-l-waḍʿi min aṣ-ṣifati li-anna kulla ṣifatin yuqālu lahū –smun wa-lā yuqālu li-kulli –smin ṣifah*. Ragib, *On Creeds*, 83.

think of an idea of 'increase' (*az-ziyādah*) when one hears the name 'Zayd', rather one thinks of the person Zayd.[510]

Names other than proper names are either derived (*muštaqq*) from other words that share a connecting idea, or not. Non-derived names are all those which are coined by fiat for a specific idea.[511]

There are two sorts of attributes. Firstly, those that 'express an idea that subsists in the essence of the thing described, such as black and moving'.[512] When this type of attribute is used to describe two things it requires that they actually do share something. This first type can be either essential, such as heat in fire, or it can be accidental, such as heat in water. The second type of attribute "expresses an idea that does not subsist in the essence of the thing described, but is rather applied to it because of a relationship between it and something else'.[513] For example 'king of the house' is a phrase in which the relationship

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[510] *ʿalamun wa-huwa –lladī lā yuʿtabaru fīhi maʿnan wa-innamā yağrī mağrā –l-išārati ilayhi ka-Zaydin –lladī lā yurāʾī fīhi maʿnā –z-ziyādah*. Ibid.

[511] *wa-ġayru muštaqqin kullu –smin wuḍiʿa fī aṣli –l-luġati li-nawʿin mā min ġayri -ʿtibāri maʿnan fīhi huwa mawğūdun fī ġayrihī*. Ibid., 84. The next section is unclear:

> The difference between the derived name and the description is that the description does not depend, in all its constituent parts, on every aspect that is found in the attribute. With regard to the name, however, one follows the coiner of the language by fiat, and the name cannot be generally applicable to everything that is found in the idea.

Ragib's point appears to be that *waṣf* is an unstructured speech act from which deductions cannot be made, while this is not the case with the *ism al-muštaqq*, from which deductions about the referent can be made with the help of the lexicon. The translation above follows Feyzullah Efendi 2141. Al-ʿAğalī's edition is corrupt (ibid.), and the other two mss. have less convincing versions.

> *wa-l-farqu bayna –l-smi –l-muštaqqi wa-bayna –l-waṣfi anna –l-waṣfa lā yatawaqqafu fī ağzāʾihī ʿalā kulli mā wağada fīhi tilka -ṣ-ṣifatu wa-l-smu yuttabaʿu fīhi wāḍiʿa –l-luġati wa-lā yuğʿalu muttaradan fī kulli mā wağada fīhi ḏālika –l-maʿnā*. ———. Feyzullah Efendi 2141. f.44b.
> *wa-l-farqu bayna –l-smi –l-muštaqqi wa-bayna –l-waṣfi anna –l-waṣfa lā yatağayyaru bi-tawaqqufin fī ağzāʾihī ʿalā kulli mā wağada fīhi tilka -ṣ-ṣifatu wa-l-smu yuttabaʿu fīhi wāḍiʿa –l-luġati wa-lā yuğʿalu muttaradan mā wağada fīhi ḏālika –l-maʿnā*. ———. Sehid Ali 382. f.23b.
> *wa-l-farqu bayna –l-smi –l-muštaqqi wa–l-waṣfi anna –l-waṣfa lā yatawaqqafu fī ağzāʾihī ʿalā kulli mā wağada fīhi tilka -ṣ-ṣifatu wa-l-smu yuttabaʿu bihi wāḍiʿa –l-luġati wa-lā yuğʿalu muttaradan ġayra maʿnan mā wağada fīhi ḏālika –l-maʿnā*. ———. Chester Beatty AR 5277. f.17b.

[512] *mā huwa ʿibāratun ʿan maʿnan yaqūmu bi-ḏāti –l-mawṣūfi ka-l-aswadi wa-l-mutaḥarrik*. ———, *On Creeds*, 84.

[513] *mā huwa ʿibāratun ʿan maʿnan lā yaqūmu bi-ḏātihī bal yuṭlaqu ʿalayhi li-ʿalāqatin baynihī wa-bayna ḏālika*. Ibid.

between an actual king and the king of a house is not one where something is actually shared between their two separate essences.

When Ragib argues for a distinction between attributes that do not imply real ontological connections and those that do, he is clearly thinking about God. He wants to imply that the relationship between God and knowing in "God is knowing" is not the same as the relationship between "the stone" and "black" in "the stone is black". Instead God is knowing in the same way as the castle in 'an Englishman's home is his castle' is a real castle with crenellations and a drawbridge.

In the immediately preceding discussion about the nature of names and attributes, Ragib makes some interesting points about linguistic structure and the way in which it relates to the external physical world. Proper names are expressions that directly indicate external physical referents, not ideas. This is a reiteration, using different terminology, of his argument in his manual of poetics, where he says that language is either a proper name or it is polysemous.[514] We can now refine this as follows: language is either a connection between an expression and the ideas shared between people's minds, in which case it is inevitably polysemous, or it is a proper name that connects an expression directly to an external physical referent.

Next, Ragib undertakes a brief heresiographical review of those attributes that are said to be connected to God's essence, without mentioning names of schools or scholars.

The first school of thought holds that 'God is alive, powerful, and knowing, with a knowledge, power, and eternal life, and that these ideas subsist and exist for him in his

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[514] See page 115.

essence, thereby making him alive, powerful, and knowing'.[515] This is an Ašʿarī position,[516] and Ragib's objection to it is that it implies God is a composite.

The second position is also Muʿtazilī,[517] and holds that God does not have these attributes but that they are rather states (*aḥwāl*) to which he is entitled, which should not be described as eternal, or as things. Ragib's objection here is that although the first school of thought was incorrect and implied polytheism, it did at least make sense whereas this second school of thought is incomprehensible.[518]

The third position maintains that God is, for example, knowing with a knowledge in his essence, and that his essence is able to be the two things at the same time. Ragib allows that this might be the case, but notes that it does open the door for a perception of God as composite.

The fourth position is that God is, for example, knowing, but does not have knowledge,[519] and that the idea behind the name 'knowing' is the same whether it is used for God or humans. Ragib objects both to the sharing of an idea between God and humans, and to 'the invention of names, the referents of which it is impossible to know through the lexicon'.[520]

The fifth position is that of the traditionists (*ahl al-aṯar*), who maintain that God has these attributes, can be described with them, but there is no connection between the idea behind

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[515] *anna –llāha taʿālā ḥayyun qādirun ʿālimun bi-ʿilmin wa-qudratin wa-ḥayātin qadīmatin wa-anna hāḏihī –l-maʿānī qāʾimatun bi-ḏātihī mawǧūdatun lahū wa-bi-hā ṣāra ḥayyan ʿāliman wa-qādiran*. Ragib, *On Creeds*, 86.

[516] Ibn Fūrak, *Maqālāt ed. as-Sāyiḥ*, 39. However, al-Ašʿarī also attributes an analagous position to the Muʿtazilī Abū Huḏayl (Muḥammad b. al-Huḏayl al-ʿAbdī, d. ca. 227/842). al-Ašʿarī, *Maqālāt*, 165, 188; Peters, *God's created speech*, 251.

[517] It is attributed to Abū Hāšim al-Ǧubbāʾī. See: ———, *God's created speech*, 252-253.

[518] Ragib's objection is to the doctrine that God does not have these attributes (*maḏhabu man lā yaṯbutu lahū ʿilman wa-qudratan wa-ḥayātan*) rather than the doctrine of states (*aḥwāl*), Ragib having previously stated that the attributes do express God's states (*wa-ṣ-ṣifatu ʿibāratun ʿan ḥālin min aḥwāli –ḏ-ḏāti*). Ragib, *On Creeds*, 83, 86.

[519] Up to this point, this is the position that al-Ašʿārī attributes to "most of the Muʿtazilah" and a number of other sects. al-Ašʿarī, *Maqālāt*, 164.

[520] *maʿa –ḫtirāʿi asāmin lā sabīla ilā –l-wuqūfi ʿalā madlūlātihā min ḥaytu –l-luġah*. The implication here is that the idea of a "knowledge" that humans and God share is not in the lexicon. All that the lexicon can provide is explanations of the "knowledge" that humans have, in addition to negative explanations of how God's knowledge is, for example, *not* limited. Ragib, *On Creeds*, 87.

them when applied to him, and the idea behind them when applied to humans. If these names are applied to humans, then they communicate a specific form (*hayʾah*) that involves (in the case of 'knowing') something being known, or (in the case of 'doing') some action being taken. On the contrary, when these names are applied to God they communicate absolute negatives: there is nothing that he does not know, and there is nothing that he cannot do. The expression 'knowing' is therefore effectively two expressions, one for humans and one for God. The expression for humans admits negatives and context, such as 'he does not know that', or 'he can do that in such a place'. The expression for God admits neither negatives nor any limitation.

Expressions of praise and blame have levels, and God is of course at the very highest level of the expressions of praise. This is why people have said that these expressions are literal when applied to God and non-literal when applied to humans. God is the one who is most entitled to be described with these words. The is the same dynamic as applies when humans are described as truly human only when they fulfill their ethical promise, otherwise they are described as donkeys or cows.[521]

It is interesting that none of the five positions that Ragib lays out match the famous doctrine mainted by al-Ašʿarī: that God is knowing with a knowledge, but that knowledge cannot be God.[522] The closest Ragib's brief heresiography comes to this is the third position, which shares al-Ašʿārī's formulation that God is knowing with a knowledge in his essence, but lacks his consequent statement that it is impossible for this knowledge to be God. Instead, we get Ragib's phrase "and that his essence is able to be the two things at the same time", which can be read as a positive rendering of al-Ašʿarī's (and Ibn Kullāb's)[523] negative statements. Ragib is, in effect,

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[521] Ibid., 88-89. Ragib makes this same point in his ethical works, see: ———, *Analysis of the Two Creations*, 26-28 (introduction).

[522] *ṣaḥḥa annahū ʿālimun bi-ʿilmin yastaḥīlu an yakūna huwa nafsuhū*. al-Ašʿarī, *The Theology*, 14.

[523] Ragib's third position also lacked the related statement of Ibn Kullāb, who also said that God is knowing with a knowledge in his essence, but went on to say that "God's attributes belong to his essence and subsist in him, but are not him, nor anything other than him, and they do not have attributes of their own". ———, *Maqālāt*, 169.

arguing that if theologians want to say that God's attributes are in God's essence but are not God, then they must mean that his essence can be two things at once.

It is therefore clear that Ragib is conscious of the ontological aspect of the problem of the attributes, and indeed his criticism of the first three positions is that they imply God is ontologically composite. However, both his argumentation throughout the long passage on the attributes, and the fifth position to which he adheres, have a semantic aspect. He writes that both of the two main concepts in question (name and attribute) are aspects of the relationship between language and essence: expressions that act as signs for essences, and expressions of the states of essences. This assumption that language is inextricably part of the problem was not shared by the Ašāʿirah and Muʿtazilah, who argued about the ontological relationship between God's essence and his attributes, not about the relationship between language and essences.

For Ragib, God's attributes are linguistic structures that God used to describe himself in his revelation, and that humans can consequently use to describe him. These linguistic structures are made up of expressions that refer to ideas. The ideas are then ideas of ontological entities, such as God himself, or a human being. Ragib's answer to the problem of the attributes uses this model to describe a situation in which each expression can refer to two different ideas. One idea is made up of negative associations and is of God, while the other idea is made up of positive associations and is of humans. Therefore the expression "knowing" can either refer to the idea of God not being ignorant of anything, or it can refer to the idea of Zayd knowing ʿAmr is at home (but possibly not knowing in which room).

This model enables us to contribute to an interpretative problem highlighted by Heinrichs. An-Nāšiʾ al-Akbar (Abū al-ʿAbbās, d. 293/906) was reported to have written that the attributes

apply to God literally (*fī-l-ḥaqīqah*) and to anyone else non-literally (*fī-l-maǧāz*).[524] Ragib

proposed the same distinction, albeit with different reasoning. For an-Nāši ̉, the literal or non-

literal binary was the only way in which the difference between attributes applied to God and

attributes applied to humans could be described. He is reported to have written that names can

apply to two different external physical referents (*al-musammā*) for four different reasons: either

there is a similarity (*ištibāh*) in their essences; or a similarity in some quality of their essences

(*li-štibāhi mā -ḥtamalathu –ḏ-ḏātayn*) such as "colour" or "movement"; or they share a

necessary quality, the absence of which means they cease to be what they are, such as "sensible"

or "created" (*li-muḍāfin uḍīfa ilayhi wa-muyyizā minhu lawlāhu mā kānā ka-ḏālika*); or they

apply to one literally and to the other non-literally. When it comes to the attributes, God, and

humanity, there can be no sharing or similarity of essences or qualities, and the literal/non-literal

binary is therefore the only option. Ragib, on the other hand, explained the applicability of the

literal/non-literal binary to the problem of the attributes in terms of the breadth of semantic field

available in any idea: there are always degrees of a quality, God is always at the highest degree,

and God is therefore more entitled to be connected to the name by fiat coinage (i.e. literally) than

anyone else.[525]

Heinrichs raises the question of whether an-Nāši ̉'s use of "literally" (*fī-l-ḥaqīqah*) is a

claim about the real nature of an external physical reality, or a claim about the nature of the

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[524] Or *bi-l-ḥaqīqah* and *bi-l-maǧāz*. ibid., 184-185, 500-501; Heinrichs, "The *Ḥaqīqa-Majāz* Dichotomy," 136-137; Vishanoff, *Islamic Hermeneutics*, 22.

[525] al-Ašʿarī, *Maqālāt*, 184-185, 500-501; Ragib, *On Creeds*, 88-90. There is, of course, a degree of circularity in Ragib's argument: the determining factor in what is coined by fiat is of course the fiat coiner himself – God. See also notes 214 and 521 for Ragib's other uses of the literal/non-literal binary.

linguistic description of that reality.[526] Looked at in light of the greater detail about linguistic structures available in Ragib's work it would appear to be both. An-Nāši''s basic linguistic structure is one in which words (names, *al-ism*) refer to external physical reality (*al-musammā*) and the ways in which they do so are determined by the identity of that external physical reality. In Ragib's more nuanced model, expressions refer to ideas in the mind, and the mind is sensitive to ontological problems. The language user therefore decides to which ideas the expressions refer based on ontological considerations. In the work of both scholars, separated by approximately 100 years, the dynamic is neither purely semantic nor purely ontological. It is rather a dynamic in which semantic decisions are made on the basis of ontological considerations.

Poetics

Poetry was central to mediaeval Islamicate intellectual culture. It was both a source of linguistic precedent and an arena for innovation. By the eleventh century, for a scholar such as Ragib who may have lived his whole life in Iranian towns and villages where Persian was the most common spoken language, and for whom the Prophet and his companions were as chronologically distant as the Spanish Armada and the founding of New York and Boston are to us today, poetry was a living link to pre-Islamic Arabia. Ragib was familiar with the same poetic culture that Muḥammad grew up with in the seventh century, and he was also an active part of a development of poetic criticism that had been gathering momentum and complexity ever since the, possibly apocryphal, poetic competitions in the pre-Islamic Ḥiğāz.

One thread of the discussions about poetics is particularly relevant to this dissertation. It is the distinction often made between analysis of poetry in terms of its expressions, and analysis of

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[526] Heinrichs, "The *Ḥaqīqa-Majāz* Dichotomy," 137.

poetry in terms of its ideas.[527] As with many other of the apparently clear-cut distinctions that were popular with mediaeval scholars engaged in the process of writing, and indeed imagining, the history of poetic criticism, this binary is somewhat less of a chasm than it seems. Apart from a few oft-quoted claims that poetic expressions were the site of genius while poetic ideas were simply repetitions of what the man in the market was thinking,[528] the majority of scholars

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[527] For more on the debates between "partisans of expressions" and "partisans of ideas" see: ʿAbbās, *Tārīḫ an-Naqd*, 422f; Lale Behzadi, "Al-Jāḥiẓ and his Successors on Communication and the Levels of Language," in *Al-Jāḥiẓ, a Muslim Humanist for our time*, ed. Arnim Heinemann, Manfred Kropp, Tarif Khalidi, and John Lash Meloy (Würzburg: Ergon, 2009), 125-130; ———, *Sprache und Verstehen: al-Ǧāḥiẓ über die Vollkommenheit des Ausdrucks* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2009). 75f; Ḥasīkī, "Al-ʿAlāqah Bayn al-Lafẓ wa-l-Maʿnā," 190-192; Wolfhart Heinrichs, "*lafẓ* and *maʿnā*," in *Encyclopedia of Arabic literature*, ed. Julie Scott Meisami and Paul Starkey (London / New York: Routledge, 1998); Larkin, *The Theology of Meaning*, 10.

[528] Abū ʿUṯmān ʿAmr b. Baḥr al-Ǧāḥiẓ (d. 255/868) is most often quoted. He cited the opinion that ideas were merely strewn in the street and accessible to the masses and foreigners whereas expressions were the true site of eloquence and linguistic skill. al-Ǧāḥiẓ, *al-Ḥayawān*, 3:131-132. Iḥsān ʿAbbās argued that when al-Ǧāḥiẓ talked about ideas being strewn in the street he was only referring to simple ideas. ʿAbbās was using al-Ǧurǧānī's division of ideas into simple ones like those behind "Zayd left" and the more complex ideas created by metaphor and metonymy such as "the reins of the northwind". ʿAbbās, *Tārīḫ an-Naqd*, 423-424. Elsewhere, al-Ǧāḥiẓ made the authorial statement that Abū ʿAmr al-ʿAttābī (d. ca. 835) was mistaken to say that command of language was simply making one's interlocuter understand one's need, because flawed grammar and pronunciation (failures of expression) that nevertheless successfully communicates an idea could not be good language. al-Ǧāḥiẓ, *al-Bayān wa-t-Tabyīn*, 1:161. The Iḫwān aṣ-Ṣafāʾ, elitists to a man, agreed that the common man's mind could scarcely be a repository of language excellence, and therefore good language must be a matter of good expression. They did, however, have a somewhat more elevated concept of what the ideas could be, hinting that sometimes great and true ideas (such as their own) could fall on stony ground. Their definition of effective communication was "the clearest and most concise communication of an idea"(*wa-innamā –l-balāġatu hiya –t-tawaṣṣulu ilā ifhāmi –l-maʿnā bi-awġāzi maqālin wa-ablaġi kalām*). Iḫwān aṣ-Ṣafāʾ, *Rasāʾil, Beirut*, 3:121-122.

believed that poetry involved both expressions and ideas,[529] although they differed on which were most important.[530]

Ragib's theory of meaning, as described in the previous chapter, favours neither side. Language, and therefore poetry, is a matter of the connections that people make between expressions and ideas. Poetics, as we shall see below, is the study of how these connections are made, and how they differ according to the different rhetorical figures employed. Ragib also makes this position clear at two points in his *adab* compendium. In one anecdote a Bedouin praises a man by saying that it was "as if his expressions were the moulds of his ideas", and in another, a poet says "his ideas adorn his expressions, and his expressions are the adornments of

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[529] Abū al-Fatḥ ʿUṯmān Ibn Ǧinnī (d. 392/1002) wrote, in a rejection of the apparently still prevalent argument that the early masters of poetry were only concerned with expressions, that the only reason one focuses on expressions is in order to make sure that one's ideas are getting across (*fa-lā tarayanna anna –l-ʿināyata iḏ ḏāka innamā hiya bil-l-alfāẓi bal hiya ḫidmatun minhum li-l-maʿānī*). Ibn Ǧinnī, *al-Ḥaṣāʾiṣ*, 215-217, 217. Cf. A. Elamrani-Jamal, *Logique Aristotélicienne et grammaire arabe. Étude et documents* (Paris: J. Vrin, 1983). 102. Unsurprisingly, given the nature of *adab*, al-Ǧāḥiẓ provides an anecdote that points in this direction as well. He records that Bišr b. al-Muʿtamir (Abū Sahl al-Hilālī, d. ca. 210/825) defined effective communication (*al-balāġah*) as that in which the expressions are refined and sweet but the idea is commonly known and appropriate to one's audience, whether that audience is the elite or the masses. An idea is not necessarily more noble because it is an elite idea, nor baser because it circulates among the masses, but rather the value of an idea lies in its linguistic correctness, its usefulness, and its appropriateness to the situation in which it is used. al-Ǧāḥiẓ, *al-Bayān wa-t-Tabyīn*, 1:135-136. Cf. Thomas, "Concept of *Muḥāḍara*," 112-115.

[530] Ibn Rašīq (Abū ʿAlī Ḥasan al-Qayrawānī, d. ca. 456/1063) describes the different schools of thought on the matter in terms of the choice that poets themselves made, when composing, to either privilege the eloquence of their expressions or the quality of their ideas and motifs (presumably when faced with the need to make a choice to fit the metre). Ibn Rašīq al-Qayrawānī, *al-ʿUmdah fī Maḥāsin aš-Šīʿr wa-Ādābihī*, ed. Muḥammad Muḥyī ad-Dīn ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd, 2 in 1 vols. (Cairo: Maṭbaʿāt Ḥiǧāzī, 1934). 1:103f (chapter 19). At the end of the eleventh century al-Ǧurǧānī expressed his impatience with over-emphasis on expressions, writing that "the expressions are the servants of the ideas; the ideas decide how the expressions can circulate" (*al-alfāẓu ḫidamu –l-maʿānī wa-l-muṣarrafatu fī ḥukmihā*). ʿAbd al-Qāhir b. ʿAbd ar-Raḥmān al-Ǧurǧānī, *Asrār al-Balāġah: the mysteries of eloquence*, ed. Hellmut Ritter (Istanbul: Government Press, 1954). 8. This exact point would be repeated by Ḍiyāʾ ad-Dīn Ibn al-Aṯīr (Abū al-Fatḥ Naṣrallāh, 558/1163-637/1239), who wrote that "expressions are the servants of the ideas, and there is no doubt that the one served is more noble than the servant". Ḥasīkī, "Al-ʿAlāqah Bayn al-Lafẓ wa-l-Maʿnā," 190. Quoting Ibn al-Aṯīr's *al-Maṯal as-Sāʾir fī-Adab al-Kātib wa-š-Šāʿir*. Edited by Aḥmad al-Ḥawfī and Badawī Ṭabānah. Cairo: Maktabat Naḥḍat Misr, 1960. 1:240, 249.

his ideas".[531] The two central components of linguistic structure appear to interact on an equal basis.

Furthermore, and perhaps most importantly, the controversy about the primacy of expressions versus ideas helps us understand what ideas were thought to be. The criticism of ideas strewn in the street for the masses that we find reported in al-Ǧāḥiẓ (Abū ʿUtmān ʿAmr b. Baḥr, d. 255/868) and believed in by the Iḫwān reinforces the notion that ideas were an entity that could be shared between language users. Ideas had an ontological status, albeit a non-physical one. They were part of an objective shared reality. Ideas could also therefore be anything from the idea behind the simplest of nouns, shared by all, to the complex motif behind a line of poetry, equally accessible to poets and their audiences.[532]

The title on our only manuscript of Ragib's manual of poetics is *Ragib on Innovative Figures of Speech* (*Kitāb min Kalām ar-Rāġib fī-l-Badīʿ*).[533] While it may not be the author's own title, it is appropriate for a work in the introduction to which Ragib says: "this book contains the methodologies of the arts of innovation in prose and poetry" (*wa qad intahaytu fī-mā amlaytu ṭuruqa funūni –l-badīʿi min an-naẓmi wa-n-naṯri*).[534] The manual contains a taxonomy of rhetorical figures, the "methodologies and arts" to which Ragib refers. He wrote that he

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[531] *madaḥa aʿrābīyun raǧulan fa-qāla ka-anna alfāẓahū qawālibu li-maʿnīhi. qāla –š-šāʿiru [min al-mutaqārib] tazīnu maʿānīhi alfāẓahū / wa-alfāẓuhū zāʾinātu –l-maʿānī*. Ragib, *Littérateurs' Ripostes*, 1:125. (See also note 558). Ragib's *adab* compendium tends to organise anecdotes on the *maḥāsin/masāwī* (good things/bad things) model, in which praise of something is always juxtaposed with its blame and vice versa. The section titled "an expression helping an idea to be good" (*lafẓun sāʿada –l-maʿnā fī-l-ǧūd*) consists in its entirety of just the two items quoted above, and is not complemented by a contradictory neighbouring section. This makes it likely that it reflects Ragib's own opinion, though he makes no reference to the scholarly controversy itself.

[532] NB: at the end of the eleventh century, Ibn Rašīq would draw a distinction between "the crafted poetic idea" (*maʿnā aṣ-ṣanʿah*) achieved by rhetorical figures, and the normal "idea of speech", which is the "spirit" (*rūḥ*) behind every expression. Ragib never makes such a distinction. Ibn Rašīq al-Qayrawānī, *al-ʿUmdah*, 1:111 (chapter 20). Cf. Heinrichs, *lafẓ and maʿnā*, 462.

[533] See details at pages 53 and 259.

[534] Ragib. *Innovative Figures of Speech*. f.2b.

enumerated these techniques in order to enable the reader to engage in criticism, distinguish between good and bad poetry, and compose good poetry.[535] Where does innovation come in? I have argued in the previous chapter that Ragib's understanding of the relationship of language to the lexicon was such that poetry would inevitably involve the creation of new connections between expressions and ideas. His manual of poetics is an explanation of how this happens. Good poetry, and indeed good prose, is characterised by successful manipulation of the relationships between expressions and ideas. Ragib's manual records, classifies, and analyses these manipulations, and in the last (incomplete) chapter on literary plagiarism (*as-sariqāt*) he seeks to determine their originality and the dynamics of their transmission.

The nature of poetry is that someone always uses connects an an idea to an expression for the first time, and then others either copy, or respond with variations that are subsequently assessed as good or bad. The term for innovation was *badīʿ*. I prefer this translation to reading *badīʿ* as a specific reference to the new style of the *muḥdaṯūn* (poets from the eighth-century onwards), or to a specific craft or collection of rhetorical artifices.[536] Ragib wrote in *The Path to*

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[535] After the *ḥamdallah*, Ragib starts:

> You asked me, may God continue to bless you, to dictate something that could act as a signpost in the field of poetic criticism, and that would distinguish between the worthless and the choice. Whoever comes to recite and criticise poetry, even if he already knows most of its lexicographical, Arabic, historical, and analogical apparatus etc., and even if he has a natural inclination towards the best poetry, nevertheless he must have the tools of criticism to the extent that they guide and help him with that which he composes and criticises. (*saʾaltum adāma –llāhu –l-imtāʿa bikum an umliya mā yuǧʿalu amāratan fī naqdi –l-ašʿāri wa-fāriqan bayna –n-nufāyati minhu wa-l-muḥtāri fa-l-mutaʿāṭī li-qarīḍi -š-šiʿri wa-naqdihī wa-in ḥaṣala ǧulla adawātahū min –l-luġati wa-l-ʿarabīyati wa-l-aḥbāri wa-l-amṯāli wa-ġayri ḏālika wa-yakūnu ḏā ṭabʿin māyilin [sic.] ilā ʿuyūni –l-ašʿāri fa-lā budda lahū min ālāti –n-naqdi ilā mā yuršiduhū wa-yaʿḍudahū li-yakūna muġīdan fīmā yansiġuhū wa-yanquduhū*).

Ibid., f.1b.

[536] It is true that the most prominent early work that deals explicitly with *badīʿ*, the *Kitāb al-Badīʿ* of Ibn al-Muʿtazz, gives the impression that it is a defined craft rather than a description. The caliph and critic writes that "we present in the chapters of this our book the part of what the *muḥdaṯūn* call *al-badīʿ* … Baššār, Muslim, Abū Nuwās and those who followed them were not the first to achieve *this craft*… (*lam yusbiqū ilā hāḏā –l-fanni*). ʿAbdallāh Ibn al-Muʿtazz, Kitāb al-Badīʿ, ed. Ignatius Kratchkovsky (London: E. J. W. Gibb Memorial, 1935). 1. It is also true

the Nobilities that *ibdāʿ* meant ex nihilo creation, and that while it was strictly only something that God could do, the Bedouin Arabs had used it to describe someone who dug a fresh well in a previously untapped area, and someone "who composed poetry or produced speech that had never been composed in that way before".[537] I think that for Ragib and many of his contemporaries the term *badīʿ* primarily served to isolate and recognise innovation.[538] It may in fact be unproductive to draw a distinction between a "specific collection of rhetorical artifices" and "innovation" because the poets were innovative *with* rhetorical figures,[539] which were then enumerated and collectively called "innovative". For Ibn Rašīq (Abū ʿAlī Ḥasan al-Qayrawānī, d. ca. 456/1063), "producing something *badīʿ* means that the poet comes forth with an idea which is considered a novelty the like of which has never been habitual".[540]

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that the concept of *badīʿ* in literary criticism was inextricably linked with the *muḥdat* revolution when, as Heinrichs says, poetry became a literary rather than an oral tradition and the focus of attention shifted "from depicting reality … to 'improving' earlier poetry". Wolfhart Heinrichs, "Paired Metaphors in Muḥdath Poetry," *Occasional Papers of the School of Abbasid Studies* 1(1986): 1. For these usages see ———, "Istiʿārah and Badīʿ," 191; ———, "Literary Theory: The Problem of Its Efficiency," in *Arabic Poetry: Theory and Development*, ed. G. E. von Grunebaum (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1973), 67-69; ———, "Paired Metaphors," 2-3; John Wansborough, "A Note on Arabic Rhetoric," in *Lebende Antike. Symposium für Rudolf Sühnel*, ed. H. Meller and H. J. Zimmermann (Berlin: 1967), 57.

[537] *al-ibdāʿu wa-huwa īğādu –š-šayʾi dufʿatan lā ʿan mawğūdin wa-lā tartībin wa-lā ʿan naqṣin ilā kamālin wa-laysa ḏālika illā li-l-bārī taʿālā wa-in kānat –l-ʿarabu qad tastaʿmilu –l-ibdāʿa fīman yaḥfiru biʾran fī makānin lam yaḥfir fīhi min qablu wa-fīman nasağa šiʿran aw awrada kalāman lam yansiğ ʿalā minwālihī min qabl.* Ragib, *The Path to the Nobilities*, 293.

[538] Cf. "[T]he second prerequisite for the rise of *muḥdat* poetry is a craving for innovation on the part of the poet as well as his audience". Heinrichs, "Paired Metaphors," 2.

[539] See Heinrichs on "the rhetorization of poetry". ———, "Early Ornate Prose," 229.

[540] ———, The Hand of the Northwind, 49. Cf. Beatrice Gruendler, "Motif vs. Genre: reflections on the Diwān al-Maʿānī of Abū Hilāl al-ʿAskarī," in Ghazal as world literature I. Transformations of a literary genre, ed. T. Bauer and A. Neuwirth (Beirut / Stuttgart: Ergon Verlag, 2005), 72.

In *The Confluence of Eloquence* Ragib has a subsection on *kalām badīʿ* in which he gives a

series of apposite descriptions for people who invent original speech. One such description is

"virgin speech". Further descriptions are themselves in verse:[541]

> if he speaks, his speech is ungirdled by offspring.[542]

And:

> too pure for the secret plagiarism, too honourable for the repeated idea.[543]

In his *Littérateurs' Ripostes* section on the description of clouds tinged with colour that create

good pasturage Ragib quotes a line of Imruʾ al-Qays:

> continuously raining in large drops and heavy, the cover of the earth chooses the best parts,
> and pours down.[544]

Ragib then quotes the judgement of one of the al-Ḫālidī brothers: "'the cover of the earth' [for

'rain'] is *badīʿ* untouched by anyone before or after the poet, and whoever [subsequently]

engages in its [the motif's] use is defiled by his own soul".[545] Elsewhere, Ragib describes the

following line by al-Farazdaq (Ḥammām b. Ġālib, d. 110/728) as innovative:

> I am the immoderate flare of the hearth when someone wants a meal, and the dog's mild
> restraint when the guest knocks at night.[546]

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[541] Ragib, Confluence of Eloquence, 95.

[542] *wa-iḏā takallama lam yakun / fī –l-qawli minṭaqatan ʿiyālā.* Anonymous?

[543] *munazzahatan ʿan –s-sarqi –l-muwarrī / mukarramatan ʿan –l-maʿnā –l-muʿādi.* Ḥabīb b. Aws aṭ-Ṭāʾī Abū Tammām and Muḥammad b. Yaḥyá aṣ-Ṣūlī, Šarḥ aṣ-Ṣūlī li-Dīwān Abī Tammām, ed. Ḫalaf Rašīd Nuʿmān (Baghdad: Wizārat aṯ-Ṯaqāfah wa-l-Funūn, 1977). 386, #36.

[544] *dīmatun haṭlāʾu fīhā waṭafun / ṭabaqu –l-arḍi taḥarrā wa-tadurr.* Wilhelm Ahlwardt, The Divans of the Six Ancient Arabic Poets Ennabiga, 'Antara, Tharafa, Zuhair, 'Alqama and Imruulqais (London: Trübner, 1870). 125, #18 Imruʾ al-Qays.

[545] Abū ʿUṯmān Saʿīd b. Hāšim al-Ḫālidī d. 371/981 or Abū Bakr Muḥammad b. Hāšim al-Ḫālidī d. 370/980. Ragib, *Littérateurs' Ripostes*, 4:439.

[546] *wa-innī safīhu –n-nāri li-l-mubtaġī –l-qirā / wa-innī ḥalīmu –l-kalbi li-ḍ-ḍayfi yaṭruqu.* Ibid., 2:594 (line missing

He judged the line to be innovative because "the poet combines the immoderacy of the campfire, which means the extravagance of its flames, with the forbearance of the dog.[547]

There is no imaginary dimension in al-Farazdaq's line; a host may indeed immoderately leap up like a fire to serve a guest, and may indeed be calm and hospitable rather than angry when a guest arrives suddenly at night. This would make the line characteristic of the ancient, pre-*muḥdat*, poets *(al-qudamāʾ)* whose metaphors Heinrichs has described as tending towards analogies in which the source is projected onto the target to create an image that seems natural, rather than the new *muḥdat* style in which the poet would take the image created in the target and progress further with it to a new imaginary image that has no natural link back to the source.[548] This means that Ragib is comfortable applying the term *badīʿ* to the pre-*muḥdat* style of pre-*muḥdat* poets such as al-Farazdaq. If, as a critic, Ragib does not necessarily connect *badīʿ* to the new style of the *muḥdatūn* then I feel comfortable taking it to mean simply innovation.[549]

Ragib structures his manual on poetic innovation according to a tripartite typology of interactions between expressions and ideas. The manual therefore represents further evidence of his theory of meaning in action.[550] The structure is as follows:

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from index). In Ragib's poetics manual this this would be an example of *muṭābaqah* (antithesis) in which the ideas behind two nouns are contrasted while their scansion matches. ———. *Innovative Figures of Speech*. ff.26b-27a. In our modern English terminology, the line juxtaposes a pair of identifying genitive metaphors.

[547] *safīh –n-nāri* is opposed to *ḥalīmu –l-kalbi* but they have the same morphological pattern and metre. In Ragib's terms: *muṭābaqatu –l-lafẓi maʿnan wa-waznan*. ———. Innovative Figures of Speech. f26b. Cf. Heinrichs, Rhetorical Figures, 659.

[548] ———, "Paired Metaphors," 5.

[549] Although Avigail Noy has pointed out in personal correspondence that this line is an example of *muṭabaqah* (antithetical parallelism), which is itself a rhetorical figure, and therefore Ragib may still be using *badīʿ* to mean "rhetorical figures". On innovation and creativity in mediaeval Arabic poetics more generally see: Kemal, *Poetics*, 23f.

[550] It also takes Ragib into the realm of theory, rather than just taxonomy. Heinrichs noted the dominance of taxonomy (of rhetorical figures) in the history of Arabic poetics, and the paradigmatic example of this tendency is usually taken to be Abū Hilāl al-ʿAskarī (al-Ḥasan b. ʿAbdallāh, d. ca. 1010). B. Gruendler, "al-ʿAskarī, Abū Hilāl,"

i. Introduction.

ii. *tarǧamat al-abwāb wa-l-fuṣūl*. List of contents.

1. *taqāsīm al-kalām*. The structure of language.

2. *al-ḥaqīqah wa-l-maǧāz*. Literal and non-literal expression.

3. *aǧnās al-balāġah*. A typology of eloquence.

  3.1. *al-īǧāz*. Concision. Of either expression or of idea. *fa-l-īǧāzu ʿalā ḍarbayni īǧāzu lafẓin wa-īǧāzu maʿnan*.

    3.1.1. *at-talwīḥ* Indicating multiple *maʿānī* with a few *alfāẓ*. *al-išāratu ilā –l-maʿnā –l-kaṯīri bi-lafẓin qalīlin*.

    3.1.2. *at-tašbīh*. Comparison. Divided by number and type (*ʿayn* (thing) or *ḥadaṯ* (event)) of target/source.

    3.1.3. *al-istiʿārah*. By type (*ʿayn, ḥadaṯ, ism, fiʿl, ḥarf*) of target/source. Also includes *istiʿārat al-kināyah* (metonymy) in which the poet makes a description (*waṣf*), an action (*fīʿl*), or a state (*ḥāl*) that belongs to the source (*al-mustaʿār minhu*) apply to the target (*al-mustaʿār lahū*).[551]

      3.1.3.1. *al-irdāf*. To indicate one idea, the poet uses an expression for another idea that follows from the first one.

      3.1.3.2. *at-taqdīm*. Delaying the intended meaning.

      3.1.3.3. *iṭlāq al-lafẓ ʿalā mā yuǧāwiruhū*. Naming something by that which is adjacent, or near to it.

      3.1.3.4. *al-kināyāt*. Allusion and euphemism.

      3.1.3.5. *al-muzāwaǧah*. Borrowing the final clause of a conditional sentence for its initial clause, and vice versa.

      3.1.3.6. *istiʿmāl al-lafẓ ʿalā at-tahakkum*. Sarcasm, for example in reply to an image of praise.

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in *Encyclopaedia of Islam, THREE*, ed. Gudrun Krämer, Denis Matringe, John Nawas, and Everett Rowson (Brill Online: Brill, 2009); Wolfhart Heinrichs, "Rhetoric and Poetics," in *Encyclopedia of Arabic literature*, ed. Julie Scott Meisami and Paul Starkey (London: Routledge, 1998), 651; George J. Kanazi, *Studies in the Kitāb aṣ-Ṣināʿatayn of Abū Hilāl al-ʿAskarī* (Leiden: Brill, 1989). 202.

[551] The examples include the first hemistitch of the famous line by Abū Ḏuʾayb:
    when Death sinks its claws in, you find all amulets of no avail
    wa-iḏā –l-manīyatu anšabat aẓfāahā / alfayta kulla tamīmatin lā tanfaʿu.

Ragib wrote: "the poet intends to compare Death [target] to a ravaging wild beast [source] and therefore borrowed the wild beast's action [contiguous effect of source] and weapon [attribute contiguous to source]." Ragib. *Innovative Figures of Speech*. f.12b. The translation is from: Heinrichs, *The Hand of the Northwind*, 4 (note 8), 14. This tallies with the usual understanding of metonymy as the substitution of a cause, effect, or attribute of something for the thing itself. But in the later tradition cf. ———, *Rhetorical Figures*, 661.

3.1.3.7. *al-faḥwā*. Use of a single *lafẓ* to indicate other things above or below it (such as 'he wouldn't cheat you out of a penny' to mean he wouldn't cheat you out of a pound either)

3.1.3.8. *at-tamṯīl*. analogy.

3.1.3.9. *at-taḍmīn*. Using a *lafẓ* with unrestricted application while intending it to have limited application.

3.1.3.10. *al-musāwāh*. When the *lafẓ* is exactly equal to the *maʿnā*.

3.2. *al-basṭ*. Used to ensure that everyone (whether astute or obtuse) understands, or to clarify ambiguous language.

3.2.1. *at-takmīl*. Continuing with a *maʿnā* until there is no obstacle to understanding.

3.2.2. *at-tablīġ*. Use of *takmīl* at the end of the line.

3.2.3. *at-taḏyīl*. Repetition of part of the first hemistich in the second.

3.2.4. *al-istiʿānah*. Bad poetry that results from *irdāf*, *taqdīm*, and *faḥwā al-ḫiṭāb* that is unclear.

3.2.5. *a-taʾkīd*. That which removes doubt and vagueness.

3.2.6. *at-takrīr*. Repetition, which may be both superfluous and not.

- *faṣl*. Extra section not listed in contents: many grammarians rightly allow superfluous words and particles.

4. *al-ḥaḏf*. Elision of part or all of a word, or of the second half of a conditional.

5. *at-taǧnīs*. Puns and paronomasia. *iʾtilāfu –l-lafẓi maʿa iḫtilāfi –l-maʿnā*.

6. *at-taṣḥīf*. A type of *taǧnīs* where the words differ only in their pointing.

7. *al-muṭābaqah*. Antithesis.

8. *al-muqābalah*. Correspondence/opposition. More than one term on each side of the antithesis.

9. *at-tadāruk*. Asserting that which has been negated and vice versa.

10. *al-ǧamʿ bayn an-naqḍayn*. Saying something and then invalidating it. Discussion of the question of truth in poetry.

- *at-taṣdīr: radd aʿǧāz al-kalām ilā ṣadrihī*. Extra chapter not listed in contents. Putting the second hemistich in the place of the first (epanadiplosis).

11. *at-tabyīn*. Separating out and explaining expressions that refer to more than one thing.

12. *at-taqsīm*. Division. Enumeration of cases followed by an explicit mutual characterization of each.

13. *al-īġāl*. A description that crosses the line and results in an impossibility.

14. *al-iltifāt*. Switches of address from the third person to the second person and vice versa.

15. *at-tarṣīʿ*. Rhymed prose. *an takūna maqāṭiʿu –l-aǧzāʾi mutaʿādilatan fī-l-wazni*.

16. *at-taṣrīʿ*. Making the last foot of the first hemistich rhyme.

17. *al-istiṭrād*. An idea that leads to another idea, such as moving from old age into praise. *al-aḫḏu fī maʿnan yutawaṣṣalu bi-hī ilā maʿnan āḫirah muttaṣilin bi-hī min ḏālika –l-mulaḫḫiṣu min aš-šaybi ilā –l-madḥi.*

- *faṣl:* Extra section not listed in contents: the craft of poetry requires criticism of things unconnected to *balāġah*, such as the quality of the cola (*fuṣūl*).

18. *an-naẓm*. Syntactic structure.

19. *al-wazn*. Balancing the number of letters and short vowels (*ḥarakāt*).

20. *naqd aš-šiʿr*. Poetic criticism. "Some prefer complicated ideas, other complicated wordplay." Some say that one is never able to explain why one likes a particular piece of poetry.

21. *anwāʿ as-sariqāt. Types of literary borrowing.* This final (according to the contents list) chapter is partially cut off by the end of the manuscript. The colophon is therefore missing.

The manual is divided into three parts. The first four and a half folios (#s i-ii and 1-2) are introductory and consist of a discursive introduction with aposite quotations, a contents list, and analysis of the structure of language and the literal and non-literal. The next seventeen folios (#3) are a tripartite typology of effective communication (*al-balāġah*): "there are three types of effective communication: concision, equality and prolixity".[552]

The first way that effective communication can be achieved is through concision. Concision of expression is achieved through the use of morphological and grammatical structures that abbreviate, such as the diminutive (which stands for the combination of a noun and the adjective "small") and the plural (which removes the need to repeat the noun).[553] Concision of idea is achieved when a single idea communicates a plurality of ideas, such as "that which is in the skies and that which is on the land" communicating the plurality of everything both in and between them.[554] Ragib consistently understands concision as a limited amount of

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[552] The opening line of #3: *ṯalāṯatu aḍrubin īǧāzun wa-musāwāhun wa-basṭ*. Ragib. *Innovative Figures of Speech.* f.5b.

[553] Ibid., ff.5b-6a.

[554] Quran 2:255 (al-Baqarah) &c..

expression communicating an excess of idea, whether through a word that stands for the ideas of multiple words, or through an idea that stands for multiple ideas. His three sub-divisions of concision (#s 3.1.1, 3.1.2, and 3.1.3) offer different ways in which this can be achieved. He makes a distinction between ordinary concision, which is part of the lexicon coined by fiat and includes abstract numbers (*al-mubhamāt*) and names of genuses, and the concision that constitutes the eloquent inventions of the poetic craft, and includes metaphor and metonymy.[555]

The opposite of concision is prolixity (#3.2). In this case the idea is given and fixed, but for reasons specific to either the context or content of the speech act the speaker adds extra expressions in order to ensure clarity.[556]

In between concision and prolixity lies equality, wherein expressions and ideas are perfectly aligned and balanced, with an excess of neither.[557] Ragib explained equality with the

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[555] Ragib writes:
There are two types of concise expressions. The first was coined by fiat in order that one could dispense with proliferations of expressions, for example those nouns which abbreviate and by which one understands [more], and many abstract numbers and genus names. The second type is that the form of which is invented by the eloquent after their investigations of the lexicon, and it is this type that is part of the craft of poetry. *wa-alfāzu –l-īğāzi ʿalā ḍarbayni ḍarbun wuḍiʿa fī aṣli –l-luġati li-yustaġniya bihī ʿan –l-alfāzi –l-kaṯīrati ka-l-asmāʾi –llatī yustafhamu bihā wa-yuğāzī bihā wa-kaṯīrin min –l-mubhamāt wa-asmāʾi –l-ağnāsi wa-ḍarbun yaḫtaraʿu ṣīğahā -l-bulağāʾu baʿda –stiqrāʾi –l-luġati wa-huwa ad-dāḫilu fī bābi -ṣ-ṣanʿah.*
Ragib. Innovative Figures of Speech. f.6a.

[556] (Arabic text in Appendix).
Prolixity is required in a number of situations specific to it. Its context may be such as to require that the masses are made to understand somebody [more] discerning [than them]; the masses include those near at hand and far away, the quick-witted, and the slow. Alternatively, the expression may be homonymous, conveying two literal ideas, or a literal and a non-literal one, or a general and a specific idea [and therefore requiring explanation]. The prolixity may also be required for true meticulousness about the source of the information in question, which is one that requires thoroughness".

Ibid., f.17a.

[557] *al-musāwāhu wa-huwa an yakūna –l-lafẓu musāwīyan li-l-maʿnā lā zāyida* [sic.] *ʿalayhi wa-lā nāqiṣa ʿanhu.*
Ibid., f.16b. See Appendix for the Arabic text.

same piece of *adab* he used in *Littérateurs' Ripostes:* "it was as if his expressions were the moulds of their ideas".[558] He then provided the following four lines of poetry as examples.[559]

There will be days that will show you that of which you were ignorant. He whom you had not furnished with provisions will bring you news.[560]

And:

… the one most content with his path is he who treads it.[561]

And:

I am bored of the burdens of life. Bastard! He who lives for eighty years becomes nauseated.[562]

And:

I have become bored of life, its length, and these people asking me how I am.[563]

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[558] NB. in the Murād edition of *Littérateurs' Ripostes* the expressions are the moulds of the speaker's ideas *(li-maʿānīhi)* whereas in this ms. they are the moulds of their own ideas *(li-maʿānīhā)*. The latter is, I think, preferable. ———, *Littérateurs' Ripostes*, 1:125.

[559] ———. *Innovative Figures of Speech*. ff.16b-17a.

[560] (Arabic text in Appendix) [*aṭ-ṭawīl*]. The poet is Ṭarafah b. ʿAbd (d. ca. 564). Ṭarafah b. ʿAbd, *Dīwān Ṭarafah b. ʿAbd*, ed. Karim al-Bustānī (Beirut: Dār Ṣādir / Dār Beyrūt, 1961). 41.

[561] (Arabic text in Appendix) The full line reads:
    [*aṭ-ṭawīl*] Do not regret the path you tread, for the one most content with his path is he who treads it"
Ḫālid b. Zuhayr ar-Rīyāšī/al-Huḍalī with *rāḍī sunnatin* instead of *rāḍin sunnatan*. Abū Saʿīd al-Ḥasan as-Sukkarī, *Šarḥ Ašʿār al-Huḍalīyīn*, ed. ʿAbd as-Sattār Aḥmad Farrāǧ (Cairo: Maktabat Dār al-ʿUrūbah, 196-). 213.. Abū Faraǧ al-Iṣfahānī, *Kitāb al-Aġānī*, ed. ʿAbd as-Sattār Aḥmad Farrāǧ, 24 in 25 vols. (Beirut: Dār aṯ-Ṯaqāfah, 1955-1962). 6:261. With "do not be astonished at" *(wa-lā taʿǧabanna)* instead of "do not regret the". Abū Muḥammad ʿAbdallāh Ibn Qutaybah, *ʿUyūn al-Aḫbār*, 4 vols. (Cairo: al-Hayʾah al-Miṣrīyah al-ʿĀmmah li-l-Kitāb, 1964). 4:109.

[562] (Arabic text in Appendix) [*aṭ-ṭawīl*] Ragib names the poet, Zuhayr b. Abī Sulmā (fl. sixth century), from whose *muʿallaqah* this line is taken. Zuhayr b. Abī Sulmā, *Dīwān Zuhayr b. Abī Sulmā*, ed. Karim al-Bustānī (Beirut: Dār Ṣādir / Dār Beyrūt, 1964). 86. Ṯaʿlab (816-904) explained the exclamation "bastard!" as the poet blaming himself. Zuhayr b. Abī Sulmā and Abū al-ʿAbbās Aḥmad b. Yaḥyā aš-Šaybānī Ṯaʿlab, *Šarḥ Dīwān Zuhayr b. Abī Sulmā* (Cairo: ad-Dār al-Qawmīyah li-l-Ṭibāʿah wa-n-Našr, 1964). 29.

[563] (Arabic text in Appendix) [*al-kāmil*] Ibn Rabīʿah Labīd and ʿAlī b. ʿAbdallāh Ṭūsī, *Šarḥ Dīwān Labīd b. Rabīʿah al-ʿĀmīrī*, ed. Iḥsān ʿAbbās (Kuwait: Wizārat al-Iršād wa-al-Anbāʾ, 1962). 35. Ragib remarks that: "the *ulamāʾ* approved of Zuhayr's line and judged it to be good because the poet said that he was bored of the burdens of life rather than of life itself, for life is not boring. They preferred it to this line of Labīd's". Ragib makes the same remark about the same two lines in *Littérateurs' Ripostes*. Ragib, *Littérateurs' Ripostes*, 4:315.

These are four famous and well-regarded lines of poetry, but none of them contain any imagery. Their expressions convey ideas effectively in metre, but neither duplicate each other by repeating an idea nor serve on their own to communicate a plurality of ideas. In each case, every single expression has its own single idea. This one-to-one correspondence might be expected to be the pattern of language from which one can deviate, but in Ragib's manual it is relegated to one and a half folios at the end of the *istiʿārah* section, and just four lines of poetry. It is clear Ragib thinks that most good poetry and prose does not work like this. Eloquence is the act of manipulating the relationships that idea and expression have with each other so that individual ideas and expressions no longer correspond directly to each other.

The concept of poetic equality has been little studied, to the best of my knowledge, and because it speaks so directly to the relationship in poetics between expression and idea it is worthy of a brief investigation here, alongside investigation of the tripartite typology and the structure in which it sits. Ragib used established typological components. Qudāmah b. Ǧaʿfar (Abū al-Faraǧ, d. ca. 337/948), whom Ragib quoted both with and without attribution at numerous points in his manual, presented four ways in which the expression is connected to the idea: equality, concision, *irdāf*, and analogy. Qudāmah's explanations of equality, concision, *irdāf* (3.1.3.1 above), and analogy (3.1.3.8 above) are almost identical to Ragib's, although Qudāmah uses *išārah* (literally "indication") for concision instead of Ragib's *īǧāz*.[564] Qudāmah's work is structured in two parts: examples of good poetry, followed by examples of bad poetry.

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[564] The expression "as if his expressions were the moulds of their ideas" also appears in Qudāmah's discussion of equality. Qudāmah b. Ǧaʿfar, *Naqd*, 84. Qudāmah's analogy *(tamṯīl)* is when: "one intends to point out an idea and puts down words that point to another idea, and that idea and those words are an analogue *(miṯāl)* for the idea no one wants to express. Thus 'analogy'". Heinrichs, "Early Ornate Prose," 227-228. For a review of theories of concision see Geert Jan van Gelder, "Brevity: the long and the short of it in Classical Arabic literary theory," in *Proceedings of the Ninth Congress of the Union européenne des arabisants et islamisants: Amsterdam, 1st to 7th September 1978*, ed. Rudolph Peters (Leiden: Brill, 1981).

Each of these sections is divided into aspects of poetry related to the expressions (metre and rhyme) and aspects related to the ideas (everything from the genres of praise, satire and eulogy to the techniques of comparison and analogy, and the themes of love (*naṣīb*) and description (*waṣf*)). Ragib splits his manual in two as well: seventeen folios (#3) on effective communication structured according to the three ways expression and idea interact, followed by seventeen folios (#4-21) on aspects of poetry that do not involve manipulation of that interaction.

The only author that I am aware of who used Ragib's tripartite division of concision, equality, and prolixity wrote in Persian some two hundred years after Ragib's death. Šams ad-Dīn Muḥammad b. Qays ar-Rāzī (usually Šams-e Qays in Persian) wrote *al-Muʾğam fī-Maʿāyīr Ašʿār al-Ağam (The Clarification of the Measures of Persian Poetry)* in around 630/1233.[565] Šams-e Qays was fully conversant with Arabic poetics; he tells us that because Persian works quote Arabic poetry and vice versa he worked in both languages so that both peoples might benefit from his explanations.[566]

In the *Muʾğam*, Šams-e Qays deals with metre, then rhyme, and ends with a chapter on the techniques used in good poetry and prose in which the trio appear. Concision is "when the expression is small and its idea is bigger", equality *(musāwat)* "is when the expression and the idea are equal *(barābār bāšad)"*, and prolixity is when "the idea is explained with many

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[565] It has been hailed as "the most distinguished work in the history of Persian literary theory" for "from the Arab Conquest until the present day, a period of more than 1260 years, no such accurate, complete and comprehensive treatise on this subject has been composed in Persian". Respectively: J. T. P. de Bruijn, "Badīʿ," in *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, ed. Ehsan Yarshater (New York: Iranicaonline Website, 1988); (Šams ad-Dīn Muḥammad b. Qays ar-Rāzī) Šamš-e Qays, *al-Muʾğam fī-Maʿāyīr Ašʿār al-Ağam* ed. Mīrzā Muḥammad b. ʿAbd al-Wahhāb al-Qazwīnī and E. G. Browne (Leiden: Brill, 1909). 187.

[566] In the end, partly because while his Arabic readers would know Persian but his Persian readers might not know Arabic, he split the work into two books. The Persian one has survived while the Arabic one, called *al-Muʿarrab fī Maʿāyīr Ašʿār al-ʿArab* (The Clear Expression of the Measures of Arabic Poetry), has been lost. ———, *al-Muʾğam 1909 ed.*, 7-8,187. ———, *al-Muʾğam fī-Maʿāyīr Ašʿār al-Ağam* ed. Mīrzā Muḥammad b. ʿAbd al-Wahhāb al-Qazwīnī and Muḥammad Taqī Mudarris Rezāvī (Tehran: Entešārāt-e Zavvār, 2008). 23, 217.

expressions, for example when a homonym is clarified".[567] He then classifies rhetorical figures

under these three headings just as Ragib did. The category of concision contains rhetorical

figures based on metaphor and comparison, while the category of prolixity contains rhetorical

figures that provide additional information or clarify ambiguities.[568] Neither Ragib nor Šams-e

Qays provides any sub-categories of equality, and Šams-e Qays in fact only produces a single

line as an example:

> Now you always ask for more favour, and it is with your repeated asking, that your favours
> are accepted.[569]

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[567] *…maʿnī-rā be-alfāz besyār šarḥ konad … čonānke agar lafzī muštarek al-maʿnī bāšad bayān-e murād-e ḫaveš az ān bekonad…* ———, *al-Muʾǧam 1909 ed.*, 348. ———, *al-Muʾǧam 2008 ed.*, 377. Cf. *al-basṭu ... kāna –l-lafzu muštarikan bayna maʿnīyayni…* Ragib. *Innovative Figures of Speech*. f.17a.

[568] I have interposed the numbers of the sections in Ragib's manual into Šams-e Qays' text:
> *istiʿārāt [3.1.3] va-tašbīhāt [3.1.2] ǧumle az bāb-e īǧāz [3.1] ast va īǧāl va-takmīl [3.2.1] va-tabyīn va-tafsīr va-taqsīm va-istiṭrād [17] va-tafrīʿ va-harče az īn ṣināʿāt az bahr-e ziyādat-e bayānī yā rafʿ-e eštebāhī istiʿmāl konand hame az qabīl-e basṭ [3.2] soḫan ast.*

Šamš-e Qays, *al-Muʾǧam 1909 ed.*, 349. ———, *al-Muʾǧam 2008 ed.*, 378. Šams-e Qays' definition of *īǧāl* is equivalent to ar-Rāǧib's *tablīǧ* [3.2.2] and therefore should indeed come under *basṭ*. The same is true for Šams-e Qays' *tabyīn* and *taqsīm*, which are not the same as ar-Rāǧib's chapters 11 and 12. ———, *al-Muʾǧam 1909 ed.*, 327, 341, 343. ———, *al-Muʾǧam 2008 ed.*, 357, 371, 372. However, other key terms in Šams-e Qays such as *maǧāz*, *istiʿārah* and *tamṯīl* are in accordance with the Arabic tradition in which ar-Rāǧib worked. For example, the beginning of the definition of *itstiʿārah* reads:
> a type of *maǧāz* (non-literal language), and *maǧāz* is that which is the opposite of *ḥaqīqat* (literal language). *Ḥaqīqat* is when they use an expression for an idea in the way that the originator of the language first coined that expression for that idea in the lexicon (*ḥaqīqat ān ast ke lafz-rā bar maʿnī-ī iṭlāq konand ke wāḍiʿ-e luǧat dar aṣl-e waḍʿ-e ān lafz be-izāʾ-e ān maʿnī nehāde bāšad)…*

———, *al-Muʾǧam 1909 ed.*, 336. ———, *al-Muʾǧam 2008 ed.*, 365. Cf. Ragib. *Innovative Figures of Speech*. f.4a. Cf. ar-Rummānī, "an-Nukat," 79; Šamš-e Qays, *al-Muʾǧam 1909 ed.*, 346. ———, *al-Muʾǧam 2008 ed.*, 375. Ragib. *Innovative Figures of Speech*. f.33a.

The most notable variation is the disagreement on where *istiṭrād* should be placed. On the one hand, *istiṭrād* is the continuation of an idea and can be read as prolixity, but on the other, in both Šams-e Qays and ar-Rāǧib's analyses it is an idea *(maqṣūd* in Šams-e Qays and *maʿnā* in ar-Rāǧib) that is connected to *another* idea. It may therefore fit best in the second section of ar-Rāǧib's manual (17), where word units are moved around, rather than the expression-idea relationship itself being manipulated.

[569] *suʾāl raftī bīš-e ʿaṭā hamīše kunūn / hamī ʿaṭā-ye to āyad paḏīre bīš-e suʾāl.* Šamš-e Qays, *al-Muʾǧam 1909 ed.*, 348. ———, *al-Muʾǧam 2008 ed.*, 378. Rezāvī attributes this line to Abū al-Ġāsim Ḥasan b. Aḥmad ʿUnṣūrī (d. ca. 1039).

Just as in Ragib's definition, equality is the absence of any imagery that would break the one-to-one correspondence between expression and idea.

Finally, Abū ʿAbdallāh Muḥammad b. Sinān al-Ḫafāǧī (422/1031-466/1074), who was born around the time of Ragib's death, reports the same tripartite structure in his *Sirr al-Faṣāḥah* (The Secret of Eloquence) but with different names for the three categories.[570] All the lines of poetry adduced by these three critics share the lack of imagery that defines poetic equality.[571]

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[570] In al-Ḫafāǧī, concision is *išārah* (as in Qudāmah), prolixity is *taḏyīl*, and equality remains *musāwāh*. The definitions in terms of *lafẓ* and *maʿnā* are identical to ar-Rāǧib's. The expression "as if his expressions were the moulds of their ideas" is repeated. Where Ragib wrote that prolixity is for situations when the speaker wants to ensure that listeners of all abilities understand (…*tuḥtāǧu fīhi ilā tafhīmi –l-ʿāmmati [ṣ: wa-fīhum] –l-qarību wa-l-baʿīdu wa-ḏ-ḏakīyu wa-l baṭīʾu –l-fahima*…), al-Ḫafāǧī agrees and extends this to mean that concision should only be used when dealing with the elite, and equality is for those situations that fall between the two (*inna –t-taḏyīlu yuṣlaḥu ... bi-ḥaytu yakūnu –l-kalāmu muḫāṭiban bi-hī ʿāmmata –n-nāsi ... wa-l-išāratu tuṣlaḥu li-muḫāṭabati –l-ḥulafāʾi wa-l-mulūki ... wa-l-musāwāti –llatī hiya –l-wasaṭu bayna hāḏayni -ṭ-ṭarafayn*). Abū Muḥammad ʿAbdallāh b. Muḥammad al-Ḫafāǧī, *Sirr al-Faṣāḥah*, ed. ʿAbd al-Mutaʿāl aṣ-Ṣaʿīdī (Cairo: Maktabat wa-Maṭbaʿat Muḥammad ʿAlī Ṣabīḥ wa-Awlādih, 1969). 199, 209. Ragib. *Innovative Figures of Speech*. f.17a.

[571] Qudāmah cited two of the lines that Ragib used: "there will be days that will show you…" (note 560) and "for the one most content with his path…" (note 561, Qudāmah citing the full line). Al-Ḫafāǧī also cited "there will be days that will show you…". The lines not cited by Ragib are as follows:

Qudāmah:
> If you hide the malady we will not fear it, and if you declare war we will not remain seated. If you fight us we will fight you, and if you intend to spill blood we will do the same. I am prepared to leap into war on a steed, whether spurred on or allowed to walk.
> [*al-mutaqārib*] *fa-in taktumū –d-dāʾi lā naḫifhī / wa-in tabʿaṭū –l-ḥarba lā naqʿudī // wa-in taqtulūnā nuqattilkumu / wa-in taqṣidū li-damin naqṣidī // wa-aʿdadtu li-l-ḥarbi wattābatan / ǧawāda –l-maḥaṭṭati wa-l-murwadi*. Ahlwardt, *Divans*, 123. Lines 7, 8, and 11 with *tadfinu* for *taktumu* in line 7.

Qudāmah and al-Ḫafāǧī:
> And whenever a man has a characteristic it is known, even if he thinks it is hidden from people.
> [*aṭ-ṭawīl*] *wa-mahmā yakun ʿinda –mruʾin min ḫalīqatin / wa-law ḫālahā taḫfā ʿalā –n-nāsi tuʿlamī*. Zuhayr b. Abī Sulmā, *Dīwān*, 88. With *takun* and *wa-in* for *yakun* and *wa-law*.

Qudāmah and al-Ḫafāǧī:
> If you fail to refrain from ignorance or obscenity then either you wound those of mild temperament, or [your fellow] ignoramuses wound you.
> [*aṭ-ṭawīl*] *iḏā anta lam tuqṣir ʿan –l-ǧahli wa-l-ḥanā / aṣabta ḥalīman aw aṣābaka ǧāhilū*. In Zuhayr's *Dīwān* this poem is attributed to his son Kaʿb. Ibid., 71. In the *Šarḥ* by Taʿlab it is attributed to Zuhayr. Zuhayr b. Abī Sulmā and Taʿlab, *Šarḥ Dīwān Zuhayr*, 300. Ṭarafah as above.

Qudāmah:
> A band tried to ambush some of them, yet they neither ambushed, nor were they reproached, nor did they fall short.
> [*aṭ-ṭawīl*] *saʿā baʿdahum qawmun likay yudrikūhumū / fa-lam yudrikū wa-lam yulāmū wa-lam yaʾlū*. Zuhayr

I will end this section on poetics with an example of how Ragib used the pairing of

expression and idea in his *Exegesis*, and the rhetorical figures developed in his poetics manual, to

deal with the Quran. It must also be remembered that Ragib assumed throughout his manual that

the techniques for poetic innovation that he is analysing occur in both the Quran and profane

poetry. Examples from the Quran abound throughout the manual. There appears to be no doubt

b. Abī Sulmā, *Dīwān*, 63. With *yafʿalū* for *yudrikū* and *yulīmū* for *yulāmū*. Cf. Zuhayr b. Abī Sulmā and Ṭaʿlab, *Šarḥ Dīwān Zuhayr*, 114. With *yafʿalū* for *yudrikū*. Ṭaʿlab (815/6-904) explains the line as referring to a group of young men whose failed ambush was an attempt to emulate their fathers, whom they would go on to equal.

Qudāmah:
> I swear by your life! It is death that, as it fails to catch the youth, is like the loose rope whose ends are held in the hand.
> [*aṭ-ṭawīl*] *la-ʿamruka inna –l-mawta mā aḥtaʾa –l-fatā / la-ka-ṭ-ṭiwali –l-murḫā wa-ṯinyāhu bi-l-yadī*. Ṭarafah b. ʿAbd, *Dīwān*, 34.

This is the line immediately preceding "there will be days that will show you…", Qudāmah quotes them both. This line does contain the image of death being like a loose rope, but most likely Qudāmah felt that the lines needed to be quoted as a pair for them to be understood, despite equality only occuring in the second. al-Ḫafāǧī, *Sirr*, 209-210; Qudāmah b. Ǧaʿfar, *Naqd*, 84-85.

Qudāmah:
> May God not take you away o Tawbah, for the encounter with fate is the same whether one is in armour or undressed.
> [*aṭ-ṭawīl*] *fa-lā yubʿidanka –llāhu yā Tawba innamā / liqāʾu –l-manāyā dāriʿan miṯla ḥāsirī*. Laylā al-Aḫyalīyah (fl. 7th century). Abū Faraǧ al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Aġānī*, 11:213. With *Tawbu* for *Tawba*.

Al-Ḫafāǧī:
> Perhaps perfuming the breeze in welcome will restore her, take our breaths away, and augment her.
> [*aṭ-ṭawīl*] *ʿasā mumsiku –r-rīḥi –l-qabūli yuʿīduhā / wa-yanquṣu min anfāsinā wa-yazīduhā*. Abū Naṣr ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz Ibn Nubātah at-Tamīmī as-Saʿdī (939-1015). aṣ-Ṣafadī, *al-Wāfī*, 3:190-193.

Al-Ḫafāǧī:
> If the youth has a flaw in his perfection, then every sound member of mankind is defective.
> [*aṭ-ṭawīl*] *iḏā kāna nuqṣānu –l-fatā fī tamāmihī / fa-kullu ṣaḥīḥin fī-l-anāmi ʿalīlu*. Abū Naṣr Ibn Nubātah. To the best of my knowledge, these two lines by Ibn Nubātah are only extant in *Sirr al-Faṣāḥah*.

Al-Ḫafāǧī:
> Fate's children [i.e. previous generations] visited him in his youth and he cheered them up. We come to him when he is old
> [*al-basīṭ*] *atā –z-zamāna banūhū fī šabībatihī / fa-sarrahum wa-ataynāhū ʿalā –l-haramī*. al-Mutanabbī and al-Barqūqī, *Šarḥ Diwān al-Mutanabbī*, 2:1177.

Al-Ḫafāǧī:
> He continued to outstrip [them] until a jealous person said 'he has a shortcut to the heights'.
> [*al-basīṭ*] *mā zāla yasbuqu ḥattā qāla ḥāsiduhū / la-hū ṭarīqun ilā –l-ʿulyāʾi muḫtaṣarū*. Al-Buḥturī (not in *Dīwān*). Abū Manṣūr ʿAbd al-Malik aṯ-Ṯaʿālibī, *Yatīmat ad-Dahr fī Maḥāsin Ahl al-Aṣr*, ed. Mufīd Muḥammad Qamīḥah, 5 vols. (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmīyah, 1983). 2:151.

in Ragib's mind that God could use the same rhetorical figures to communicate as effectively as poets had before and after the coming of Islam:

If someone were to ask how the two comparisons in Quran 2:17 ('they are like one who lights a fire…[but God leaves them in darkness]') and Quran 2:19 ('or like the rainstorm…[that they fear]') are adjoined to each other (*kayfa waǧhu -l-ʿaṭf*) when the second is not an appropriate way to follow the first, then one could answer in one of two ways. First, that "or like the people of the rain" was intended [making the comparison between a person who lights a fire and a person who is rained upon, rather than between a person and a rainstorm]. Alternatively one could say that the coordination is on the level of the idea, because comparison (*tašbīh*) sometimes occurs on the basis of a correspondence on the level of expressions, and sometimes on the basis of a correspondence of ideas not reflected in the expressions [i.e. the comparisons are really between the fear of being in darkness and the fear of the rainstorm, rather than between lighting a fire and being rained upon]. Another example of this is Quran 3:117: 'that which they spend in this worldly life is like a cold wind that strikes a harvest of a people who have wronged themselves'. The idea of this verse is 'like the harvest of a people who have wronged themselves, which was struck by a wind' [i.e. the comparison is really between wasteful spending and a ruined harvest, rather than between spending and wind]. This reading is derived on the basis of ideas, not on the basis of expressions. Another example is the poet's:

The daughter of Ḥiṭṭān b. ʿAwf left many campsites / like a scribe adorns a parchment with the title.[572]

The grammatical reconstruction (*taqdīr*) of this verse is 'like the title that the scribe has written' [i.e. the comparison is really between the campsites and the titles, rather than

[572] Al-Aḫnas b. Šihāb aṯ-Ṯaġlibī (pre-Islamic / "long before Islam"). Lyall's (free) translation reads: "The daughter of Ḥiṭṭān son of ʿAwf left her dwellings plain / like lines drawn by skilled hands fair on a volume's opening page", and the *Ḥamāsah* has *naqqama* for *raqqaša*. al-Mufaḍḍal b. Muḥammad b. Yaʿlā aḍ-Ḍabbī, *The Mufaḍḍalīyāt: an anthology of ancient Arabian odes*, ed. Charles James Lyall and A. A. Bevan, 3 vols. (Oxford / London: Oxford University Press / Brill, 1921-1924). 1:410, 2:149; al-Marzūqī and Abū Tammām, *Šarḥ al-Ḥamāsah*, 1:721.

between the campsites and the scribal act of writing]. This type of comparison is called 'enfolded comparison' (*at-tašbīh al-mulaffaf*).[573]

Ragib deals with enfolded comparison, a relatively rare rhetorical figure,[574] in his poetics manual. He explains that it is a matter of two targets (*mušabbahayn*) being together compared to a single source (*mušabbah bihī*), and then each source being comparable to one of the targets. In the line quoted above, the multiple campsites are the target, and they are compared to the single source of the book title. The book title is then efectively multiplied, and the image becomes one of multiple book titles compared to multiple campsites. The campsites are, in effect, folded into the book title. In one of the lines of poetry Ragib uses as examples of enfolded comparison in his manual of poetics, the fore and hind-legs of a horse are folded into a single pair of legs that moves as one:

As if the two forelegs and the two hind legs were fleeing and trying to move as one.[575]

Poetics is a matter of exegesis as well as poetry, and the tools of literary criticism can be used on both the words of divine revelation and the words with which pre-Islamic poets lusted after their beloveds.

Figurative Readings

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[573] See Appendix for Arabic text. Ragib. *Carullah 84*. f.24a; ———. *Ayasofya 212*. Cf. ———, *Exegesis ed. aš-Šidī*, 814.

[574] Al-Marzūqī (Abū ʿAlī Aḥmad b. Muḥammad, d. 421/1030) was a contemporary of Ragib's, and also from Isfahan. In his commentary on the *Ḥamāsah*, he writes that comparing campsite remains to the act of writing is "enfolded, according to their methodologies" (*malfūfun fī ṭarāʾiqihim*). The "they" could well be a reference to poetics circles in Isfahan of which Ragib knew, or with which he was connected. al-Marzūqī and Abū Tammām, *Šarḥ al-Ḥamāsah*, 1:721.

[575] *ka-annamā –r-riǧlāni wa-l-yadāni / ṭālibatā watrin wa-hāribāni*. Ragib also quotes this line in his *Quranic Glossary* and *Littérateurs' Ripostes*, in the latter giving the name of the poet as Bakr b. al-Naṭṭāḥ (fl. ca. 174/790). ibid., 2:1285; Ragib, *Littérateurs' Ripostes*, 4:642; ———, *Quranic Glossary*, 163; ———. *Innovative Figures of Speech*. f.8a.

In the example of poetics in exegesis quoted above, Ragib makes a hermeneutical distinction between reading on the level of expressions and reading on the level of ideas. He was quite happy to think about what God meant, and by extension what Ragib believed through the exercise of his reason God to have meant, and then to allow his conclusions to override the divine text. We already know that this was a substantial area of debate across mediaeval Islamicate intellectual culture, and one that was usually couched in terms of human reason versus divine revelation. Schools of thought such as the Muʿtazilah believed that the divine word could be evaluated, and if necessary overriden or explained away by human reason whereas everyone else, from the Ašāʿirah to the Ḥanābilah and beyond, believed that such a Muʿtazilī position was dangerous and heretical overreach. How could humans, created and controlled by God, be able to decide for themselves what God should or should not have meant? Ragib was taking a Muʿtazilī position here, despite as we have seen regarding himself as an opponent of theirs, and holding fast to the text of divine revelation and its precedent in all doctrinal matters.

It was Ragib's focus on language that enabled him to square this circle. I would argue that it was because he saw language as composed of both expressions and ideas that he could choose to either follow God's ideas or God's expressions while remaining faithful at all times to God's language. His theory of meaning therefore enabled him to make the bold claim that God's literal word should be understood as analogy rather than fact. Taking it as analogy did not make it less divine, and reading it as a figure of speech did not privilege human reason above God's wisdom. Unsurprisingly, Ragib explained this position of his in terms of the pairing of expression and idea.

At the very end of *The Path to the Nobilities*, Ragib concluded a discussion about the different ways in which an action can be read (God as the first cause, humans as the immediate cause, etc.[576]) with the following remark:

> This is a subject in which one cannot establish ideas according to their equivalent expressions. One cannot, therefore, look at the idea through the expression. One must rather look at the expression through the idea.[577]

Ragib made exactly the same epistemological claim in the methodological introduction to his *Exegesis*:

> The third area of disagreement and doubt is a difference of perspective.[578] Should one look at the idea through the expression, or at the expression through the idea? Al-Ḫaṭṭābī [Ḥamd b. Muḥammad, d. ca. 386/996], for example, looked through the expression when he established the essences of things.[579] The wise *(al-ḥukamāʾ)*, on the other hand, looked through the essences of things and then to the expressions.

> This difference is exemplified by the debate about the divine attributes. Those who look through the expression are confronted with a grave doubt by, for example, Quran 5:64 'rather his two hands are outstretched', Quran 54:14 (al-Qamar) "proceeding under our eye", and other verses like them.

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[576] See note 478.

[577] *wa-hāḍā faṣlun man taṣawwarahū lam yaʿtamid fī taṯbīti –l-maʿānī ʿalā miṯlihā min –l-alfāẓi fa-yanẓura min –l-lafẓi ilā –l-maʿnā bal yanẓuru fī naḥwi hāḍā min –l-maʿnā ilā –l-lafẓ*. Ragib, *The Path to the Nobilities*, 298.

[578] The first two areas are: homonymous expressions, and differing intents behind expressions (for the latter, see note 482).

[579] Aḥmad Ḥasan Farḥāt, the editor, persuasively interprets this as a reference to al-Ḫaṭṭābī's position on the attributes in his *al-Ġunyah ʿan al-Kalām wa-Ahlihī* (*Dispensing with Theology and Theologians*), as quoted by Ibn Taymīyah. There, al-Ḫaṭṭābī maintains that the attributes describe God's essence *(ḍāt)* rather than his abilities or actions, and therefore that the Quranic expression "hand" means that God's essence has a hand, albeit not a hand like other hands, and that "we cannot say [as Ragib does] that the idea behind 'hand' is strength and blessing" (*wa-lisnā an naqūla inna maʿnā –l-yadi –l-quwwatu wa-n-niʿmah*). Abū al-ʿAbbās Aḥmad Ibn Taymīyah, *al-Fatwā -l-Ḥamwīyah al-Kubrā*, ed. Ḥamad b. ʿAbd al-Muḥsin at-Tawayǧirī (Riyad: Dār aṣ-Ṣamīʿī, 2004). 361-365, 364; Ragib, *Methodological Introduction and Exegesis ed. Farḥāt*, 40 (note 5). Cf. Frank, "Elements`," 165-166.

[However,] when specialists in the realities of things *(ahl al-ḥaqāʾiq)* demonstrate with proofs that God is one and unblemished by multiplicity (and consequently cannot have limbs or organs), they establish the expressions based on that [principle]. They therefore understand these expressions as non-literal language and idiom, and by doing so are protected from the doubt that confronted the group discussed above.[580]

Verses that describe God were a source of doubt for non-specialists, and in *On Creeds* Ragib told his readers to "beware of thinking that there is a physical reality behind these expressions!" in the context of his discussion of God's throne.[581] Taking these verses to be analogy or figures of speech was not a rejection of God's language, it was an accurate reading of that divine text.

This position of Ragib's was not a rejection of language in favour of ontology. He was not saying that we should bypass words and instead focus on concepts, but rather that when faced with the combination of expression and idea that constitutes language we should be prepared to work on the level of the ideas rather than the expressions, if the hermeneutical situation requires. Nevertheless, the conclusions that this strategy led him to make, such as the claim that the Quranic expressions "God's hands" meant "God's blessing" put him directly at odds with the Sunni majority.[582] He was conscious of this, as we saw from his citation of al-Ḫaṭṭābī in the quotation above, and as we can see from the following discussion in the *Quranic Glossary*.

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[580] *wa-ṯ-ṯāliṯu –ḫtilāfu naẓari –n-nāẓirīna min –l-lafẓi ilā –l-maʿnā aw min –l-maʿnā ilā –l-lafẓi wa-ḏālika ka-naẓari –l-Ḫaṭṭābī ilā –l-lafẓi fī iṯbāti ḏawāti –l-ašyāʾi wa-naẓari –l-ḥukamāʾi min ḏawāti –l-ašyāʾi ilā –l-alfāẓi wa-ḏālika naḥwu –l-kalāmi fī ṣifāti –l-bārī ʿazza wa-ǧalla fa-inna –n-nāẓira min –l-lafẓi waqaʿa* [sic.] *ʿalayhi –š-šubhatu –l-ʿaẓīmatu fī naḥwi qawlihī taʿālā bal yadāhu mabsūṭāni wa-qawlihī taǧrī bi-aʿyuninā wa-mā yaǧrī maǧrāhu wa-ahlu –l-ḥaqāʾiqi lamma tabayyanū bi-l-barāhīna anna –llāha taʿālā wāḥidun munazzahun ʿan –t-takaṯṯuri fa-kayfa ʿan –l-ǧawāriḥi banū –l-alfāẓa ʿalā ḏālika wa-ḥamalū ʿalā maǧāzi –l-luġati wa-mašāʿa –l-alfāẓi fa-ṣīnū ʿammā waqaʿa fīhi –l-firqatu –l-awwal.* Ragib, "Methodological Introduction ed. Nāḥī," 87-88; ———, *Methodological Introduction and Exegesis ed. Farḥāt*, 40-41. Cf. Key, "al-Rāghib," 303-304. See note 501 on *ahl al-ḥaqāʾiq*.

[581] *iyyāka an tataṣawwara bi-hāḏihi –l-alfāẓi šayʾan min –l-maḥsūsāt.* Ragib, *On Creeds*, 105.

[582] See notes 276f.

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Ragib writes that some say God is called *al-ğabbār* in the Quran because he is powerful

and makes people do things and that lexicographers agree, deriving *al-ğabbār* from the factitive

verb *ağbara*. An alternative position denied that derivation and suggested an etymology from

ğabr in the phrase "neither compulsion (*ğabr*) nor free will". The Muʿtazilah disagreed with this

alternative position on the basis that it implied God needs to compel people, an implication that

denigrates God. Ragib then described this Muʿtazilī position as "not objectionable",[583]

characterizing them as thinking "with regard to the idea" (*min ḥaytu –l-maʿnā*) while the

lexicographers thought "with regard to the expression" (*min ḥaytu –l-lafz*).[584]

However, when it came to proposing a solution to the problems caused by Quranic

expressions, Ragib was ultimately more comfortable borrowing phraseology from Sufism than

from the Muʿtazilah. In his discussion in the *Exegesis* of the Quranic description of God raising

Jesus "to him", Ragib wrote that "to him" was a reflection of elevated noble status, and in no

way an indication of a physical upwards movement: "the real nature of this cannot be attained

through the expression. Humans can only come to know it through God's light".[585] Ragib

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[583] And it does after all fit with the first part of Ragib's own belief that there is "neither compulsion nor free will". See notes 473 and 484.

[584] God is described as *ğabbār* in Quran 59:23 (al-Ḥašar). Ragib writes:
> *fa-qad qīla summiya bi-ḏālika … liannahū yuğbiru –n-nāsa ay yaqharuhum ʿalā mā yurīduhū wa-dafaʿa baʿḍu ahli –l-luġati ḏālika min ḥaytu –l-lafza … fa-uğība ʿanhu bi-anna ḏālika min lafzi –l-ğabri –l-marwīyi fī qawlihī lā ğabra wa-lā tafwīḍa lā min lafzi –l-iğbāri wa-ankara ğamāʿatun min –l-muʿtazilati ḏālika min ḥaytu –l-maʿnā fa-qālū yataʿālā –llāhu ʿan ḏālika wa-laysa ḏālika bi-munkar.*

Ragib, *Quranic Glossary*, 184.

[585] Ragib's commentary on Quran 4:158 ("Rather God raised him [Jesus] to him" (*bal rafaʿahū –llāhu ilayhi*)):
> *wa-ḏakara qawlahū ilayhi tanbīhan ʿalā taʿzīmi –l-marfūʿi lā ʿilā išāratin ilā ḥaddin maḥdūdin tanbīhan ilā annahū ḥaṣala lahū bihī aʿlā aš-šarafi … wa-lā yumkinu –l-kašfu ʿan ḥaqāʾiqihā bi-l-lafzi wa-innamā yudrikuhū –l-insānu bi-ḥasabi mā ğaʿalahū lahū min nūrihī.*

———, Exegesis ed. Sardār, 222.

certainly saw God's light as itself a metaphor for the reason with which he had endowed humanity, but he would not describe that human reason as trumping revelation.[586]

What he was prepared to say is that when one considers the expressions and ideas that make up the language of revelation, one should ensure that the ideas stack up together, rather than focussing on the expressions alone. In effect, this position was an inevitable consequence of his assumptions about linguistic structure. If the majority of language is potentially ambiguous, made up of polysemous connections between finite expressions and infinite ideas, then it would be impossible to follow the expressions without first considering the ideas. One would have no way of knowing to which ideas, among the options provided by the lexicon, the expressions referred. Looking through the expressions at the ideas would only be possible with the proper name that is a sign for a single external physical referent. For everything else, and we have seen that everything else is the vast majority of language, an expression has the potential to mean more than one thing. There is nowhere to look for the solution other than among the ideas themselves.

Concluding Remarks on Ragib's Philosophy of Language

Having completed a review of Ragib's philosophy in language both as a theory and in practice, I will now attempt to sum up some of the most important points of the previous two chapters.

Ragib's philosophy of language is one in which linguistic ambiguity is accepted, even welcomed, and then negotiated and managed with a combination of assumptions, models of linguistic structure, and religious faith.

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[586] Indeed, in his *Analysis of the Two Creations*, Ragib compares both human reason and divine revelation to God's light. ———, *Analysis of the Two Creations*, 119 (chapter 18).

The model that underpins this philosophy of language is a theory of meaning in which expressions (*alfāẓ*) express (*ʿibārah ʿan*) ideas (*maʿānī*) according to the intent (*qaṣd*, *murād*) of the speaker. The ideas are ontologically real and shared between language users, but they are not external physical things. Expressions express either through a one-to-one correspondence; a proper noun (*ʿalam*) that is simply a sign for an external physical thing, or they express ideas, in which case they do so through polysemy (*ištirāk*). Polysemy is a situation in which the finite corpus of expressions interacts with the infinity of potential ideas. This infinity is proscribed in the lexicon (*al-luġah*), which was coined by God's fiat (*waḍ*) and then expanded upon by generations of humanity.

Literary innovation (*badīʿ*), be it in poetry or in prose, is the result of new connections being made between expressions and ideas. This creative process was undertaken by pre-Islamic poets, poets and literary figures throughout the Islamic period up to Ragib's time, and had been practiced by God in the Quran. The process is recorded in the archive of literary transmission and criticism, and when new connections become sufficiently widespread, humans choose to include them in the lexicon.

Ragib is able to exploit his theory of meaning and his assumptions about the ambiguity of language in order to solve theological problems such as that of God's compulsion versus human free will, and of God's attributes. In both these cases, he uses his theory of meaning to explain that although they use the same language, there is a massive ontological difference between God and his human creation. When faced with evidence in the form of language, a scholar must decide, with reference to the lexicon, on the intent that determines to which ideas the expressions refer. The nature of linguistic ambiguity is such that these expressions have the potential to refer to ideas as different as "God" and "human".

The nature of linguistic ambiguity is also such that expressions can refer to multiple ontologically distinct ideas *at the same time*. For this to happen, the ideas must be connected to each other, but if they are, however loose the connection, a single expression can mean two things at once. This is how we can be both responsible for our own actions and believe that God is acting through us.

5. The History of the Arabic Language Tradition

Universal Concepts

When Ragib's work, written in the late tenth/early eleventh-century Islamicate world, is read alongside the work of other scholars from different centuries and cultures it becomes clear that he was not the first to think as he did about language, and would not be the last. Many of the concepts discussed in the preceding chapters speak to fundamental human assumptions about language, mind, and reality that reoccur at all times and in all contexts.

Historical accounts of the philosophy of language usually begin with the Stoic logic of ancient Greece, where a theory of meaning developed that distinguished between expression, idea, and external physical referent, and viewed language and its ambiguities as an integral part of philosophy.[587] Some Stoic concepts are enticingly close to those found in the Arabic Language Tradition, just as they are close to concepts developed in twentieth-century Europe. However, the temptation to suggest that each civilization's scholars directly influenced the next should be resisted. The Stoic λεκτόν may perform an analogous function to the Arabic *maʿnā*,[588] and indeed an analogous function to Frege's *Sinn* and Carnap's Intension,[589] but in the absence of

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[587] The major Stoic figure is Zeno (born in Rhodes, fl. ca. 35—260 BC). It should be noted that our knowledge of Stoic logic is dependent on scattered and fragmentary data found in sources that are usually hostile to the Stoic ideals. Benson Mates, *Stoic Logic*, vol. 26, University of California Publications in Philosophy (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1953). 1, 6, 8, 11; Versteegh, *Greek Elements*, 178f. For a discussion of how Stoic logic included syntax, poetics, verbal ambiguities, and parts of speech under its purview, see: Kwame Gyekye, *Arabic Logic: Ibn al-Ṭayyib's Commentary on Porphyry's Eisagoge* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1979). 7.

[588] Mates translates λεκτόν as "the significate". Both Schöck and Versteegh address attempts to draw connection between Stoic logic and Arabic theories of meaning. Mates, *Stoic Logic*, 16; Schöck, *Koranexegese*, 386, 432; Versteegh, *Greek Elements*, 184.

[589] Mates makes a tabular comparison between the terminology of the Stoics, Frege, and Carnap that equates λεκτόν, *Sinn*, and Intension. Mates, *Stoic Logic*, 20.

intertextual proof it is safer to assume that these concepts represent fundamental human assumptions that any scholar could have developed from first principles.

The value of considering the Arabic Language Tradition alongside the variety of other linguistic models proposed throughout the ages is that doing so highlights the resilience and the civilization-wide breadth of penetration that the pairing of expression and idea achieved in Arabic. Neither the Stoic σημαῖνον and σημαινόμενον, Frege's *Sinn*, Carnap's intension, nor even Saussure's *signifiant* and *signifié* achieved the degree of acceptance within their cultural contexts that the pairing of *lafẓ* and *maʿnā* did across Arabic scholarship from the eighth-century onwards.[590] The struggle, already documented in this dissertation, to find an appropriate English translation for *lafẓ* and *maʿnā* further confirms that English lacks equally omnipresent terminology for the two basic building blocks of so many theories of meaning.

I will demonstrate in what follows that the pairing of expression and idea was an assumption about linguistic structure that everybody working in Arabic shared and used without quibble or question. In this chapter, I will focus on those scholars who used the pairing of expression and idea to manage polysemy, and whose philosophy of language accepted and managed linguistic ambiguity. These scholars constitute what I am calling the Arabic Language Tradition. Ragib was a part of this tradition, and an exemplar of it. In the conclusion that follows this chapter I will show how scholars working in the Classical Language Tradition also used the pairing of expression and idea as the foundation for a theory of meaning, but then chose, influenced by an established Aristotelian philosophy of language, not to embrace the role that

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[590] Respectively: sign/indicator and significate/indicated, sense, intension, signifier and signified. All of these terms do, of course, have their own defined roles in the theories of meaning in which they were situated. This is not the appropriate place for a detailed analysis of those theories. Schöck, *Koranexegese*, 386; Versteegh, *Greek Elements*, 179. See also note 346 and page 199 in addition to Speaks, *Theories of Meaning*.

polysemy and ambiguity could play. The Arabic Language Tradition and the Classical Language Tradition therefore shared an assumption about linguistic structure but disagreed on the nature of the relationship between language, mind, and reality. Expression and idea were omnipresent in Arabic-language scholarship, but only the Arabic Language Tradition exploited their potential to manage ambiguity.

Early Analyses of Linguistic Ambiguity

Our story begins in the two great garrison towns of southern Iraq, Basra and Kufa. Together, they were the dual hub of intellectual production for the nascent Islamic civilization that had founded them as army camps around the year 17/638. The first scholars whose work is available to us were born some sixty years later, and by the time Abū Ḥanīfah and Abū al-Ḥasan Muqātil b. Sulaymān died in 150/767 the Abbasid dynasty had not only brought the caliphate back to Iraq from Syria in 132/749, but also founded a third city in 146/763. That city, Baghdad, would overshadow everything else for the next few centuries.

We cannot know, in the absence of manuscript evidence, what scholars were saying and writing in the century before Abū Ḥanīfah became head of his Kufan study circle in 120/737,[591] but it must have been an incredible period in which to work. We know from reports in later sources that the Quranic text was being discussed and fixed, and that arguments were starting

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[591] Yanagihashi, *Abū Ḥanīfa*. When it comes to our knowledge of the region's already-developed intellectual traditions, it should be noted that we:

> [H]ave no evidence of handbooks or technical treatises of rhetoric in Syriac from the pre-Islamic period … [t]he fifth and sixth centuries marked the beginning of the intensive Syriac work of translation and commentary on the *Organon* … for evidence of a technical treatise in Syriac … we have to wait until the Islamic period.

Furthermore, "the bulk of the technical theory of late antiquity is devoted to judicial and deliberative rhetoric". John W. Watt, "Literary and Philosophical Rhetoric in Syriac," in *Literary and Philosophical Rhetoric in the Greek, Roman, Syriac and Arabic Worlds*, ed. Frédérique Woerther (Hildesheim: Georg Olms, 2009), 144, 149.

about the central issues of theology. Arguments about politics had of course already been the cause of two civil wars.

Abū Ḥanīfah and Muqātil are the very first Arabic-language scholars whose work is extant. This is particularly important in the context of this dissertation because the nature of an investigation into linguistic structures is such that the words and phrases that scholars used are of primary importance. If the scholars in question are reporting the scholarship of their predecessors, then regardless of their doctrinal or conceptual accuracy, it would be negligent to place weight on the linguistic terminology reported to have been used by the earlier generation. The assumptions about language that I am attempting to draw out are exactly the sort of methodological and conceptual tools that would slip unnoticed into a scholar's transmission of earlier work. With at least one of Abū Ḥanīfah's theological treatises we are on relatively certain ground when it comes to its authenticity,[592] although in the absence of a codex dating from his lifetime nothing can be certain. With Muqātil we are on firmer ground, for a papyrus fragment dating from around the time of its author's life has been studied by Nabia Abbott and established as his study of Quranic polysemy.[593]

We can tell from Abū Ḥanīfah's works that theological arguments were already raging during his lifetime, and that language itself was under consideration. In a letter written to the

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[592] Hiroyuki Yanagihashi writes that the *Risālah ilā ʿUṯmān al-Battī* (discussed in note 52) is regarded as the only authentic text from Abū Ḥanīfah's pen, and that the other text that I make use of (*al-ʿĀlim wa-l-Mutaʿallim*), is a valid record of discussions between Abū Ḥanīfah and Abū Muqātil b. Sulaymān (Ḥafs b. Salm, d. 208/823), recorded by the latter. U. F. ʿAbd-Allāh, "Abū Ḥanīfa," in *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, ed. Ehsan Yarshater (New York: Iranicaonline Website, 2011); Nuʿmān b. Ṯābit Abū Ḥanīfah, *al-ʿĀlim wa-l-Mutaʿallim Riwāyat Abī Muqātil ... wa-yalīhi Risālat Abī Ḥanīfah ilā ʿUṯmān al-Battī ṯumma al-Fiqh al-Absaṭ*, ed. M. Zāhid al-Kawṯarī (Cairo: al-Ḫānǧī, 1949). 3; Yanagihashi, *Abū Ḥanīfa*.

[593] The text of this fragment is in accordance with the printed edition to which I refer in what follows. Nabia Abbott, *Studies in Arabic Literary Papyri II: Qurʾānic Commentary and Tradition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1957). 92f; Muqātil b. Sulaymān, *al-Wuǧūh wa-n-Naẓāʾir fī-l-Qurʾān al-ʿAẓīm*, ed. Ḥātim Ṣāliḥ aḍ-Ḍāmin (Dubai: Markaz Ǧumʿat al-Māǧid, 2006). John Wansbrough refuses to date Muqātil's work earlier than "the beginning of the third/ninth century". Wansborough, *Quranic Studies*, 209.

Basran jurist ʿUṯmān al-Battī (d. 143/760), Abū Ḥanīfah defends himself against accusations of Murǧiʾī tendencies as follows:[594]

> As for your use of the name Murǧiʾah, what would be the sin of a group of people who spoke about justice and were then called 'the people of justice' by heretics,[595] when they were in fact the people of justice, and Sunni? It is just a name that odious people applied to them. By my life, that which is disparaged as justice, were you to encourage people to call it odious, and were people to follow you and indeed call it odious, then the name 'justice' would become heresy. How, as long as you had adopted it from the just, could it be so disparaged?[596]

In a culture of oral argument what people said mattered, and the fact of their saying it raised the question of language. Quarrels about naming and what people were called by other people lay at the heart of early Muslim theology. Elsewhere, Abū Ḥanīfah makes the same distinction between a person being something and being called something,[597] and asks "how many a word is first

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[594] The Murǧiʾah were a movement that believed judgements on the status of believers in the hereafter should be postponed (*murǧaʾ*). See note 52.

[595] It would appear that Abū Ḥanīfah is referring to the still nascent Muʿtazilah (who called themselves the adherents of God's justice and unity, *ahl al-ʿadl wa-t-tawḥīd*), and that the justice he refers to is God's divine justice.

[596] The syntax here is not entirely clear:
wa-ammā mā ḏakarta min –smi –l-murǧiʾati fa-mā ḏanbu qawmin takallamū bi-ʿadlin wa-sammāhum ahlu –l-bidʿi bi-hāḏā –l-ismi wa-lākinnahum ahlu –l-ʿadli wa-ahlu –s-sunnati wa-innamā hāḏā –smun sammāhum bihī ahlu šanaʾānin wa-la ʿamrī mā yuḥaǧǧanu ʿadlan law daʿawta ilayhi –n-nāsa fa-wāfaqūka ʿalayhi an sammaytahum ahla šanaʾānin –l-battata fa-law faʿalū ḏālika kāna hāḏā –l-ismu bidʿatan fa-hal yuḥaǧǧanu ḏālika mā aḫaḏta bihī min ahli –l-ʿadl.

Abū Ḥanīfah, "Risālah ilā ʿUṯmān," 37-38. This letter is also cited by Madelung. Wilferd Madelung, "Early Sunnī Doctrine concerning Faith as Reflected in the "Kitāb al-Īmān" of Abū ʿUbayd al-Qāsim b. Sallām (d. 224/839)," *Studia Islamica* 32(1970): 236.

[597] As part of his argument that belief is not the same as good works Abū Ḥanīfah writes:
How many people do good works for another, but do not have a place among God's servants as a result, nor does the name 'placed among God's servants' apply to them. Others may have a place among God's servants and not do good works, and the name 'placed among God's servants' will nevertheless not leave them (*wa-ḏāka annahū kam min insānin yaʿmalu li-āḫirin wa-lā yakūnu bi-ḏālika maqarran lahū bi-l-ʿubūdīyati wa-lā yaqaʿu ʿalayhi –smu –l-iqrāri bi-l-ʿubūdīyati wa-āḫirun qad yakūnu muqarran bi-l-ʿubūdīyati wa-lā yaʿmalu fa-lā yaḏhabu ʿanhu –smu iqrārihī bi-l-ʿubūdiyah*).

Abū Ḥanīfah, "ʿĀlim wa-Mutaʿallim," 13.

heard and despised, and then accepted when it is explained?"[598] He also describes both

homonymy (*ism ǧāmiʿ*) and synonymy, without using the pairing of expression and idea.[599]

Questions about linguistic ambiguity were being asked, but the terminology had not been

firmly established. This conclusion is reinforced by the work of Muqātil on the Quran. In some

of the very earliest extant exegetical passages to which we have access, Muqātil uses idea

(*maʿnā*) on one occasion in his *Exegesis* and writes an entire book on Quranic polysemy. He uses

maʿnā to mean the idea behind a Quranic verse: with regard to the movement of the angels as

they take souls up to heaven, "this is the idea of [the Quranic verse] 'by the angels

hastening'".[600]

Muqātil starts his *al-Wuǧūh wa-n-Naẓāʾir fī-l-Qurʾān al-Karīm* (*Aspects and Equivalences

in the Noble Quran*) with a Hadith that he ascribes to the Prophet: "a man is not completely

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[598] *fa-rubba kalimatin yasmaʿuhā –l-insānu fa-yakrahahū fa-iḏā uḫbira bi-tafsīrihā raḍiya bihī.* Ibid.

[599] Homonymy:
> worship is a name that gathers within it obediance, desire, and fixedness in the divine (*ismu –l-ʿibādati –smun ǧāmiʿun yaǧtamiʿu fīhi -ṭ-ṭāʿatu wa-r-raġbatu wa-l-iqrāru bi-r-rubūbīyah*). Ibid., 28.

Synonymy:
> These are different words [assent, knowledge, placed, Islam, certainty] that have the same single idea, which is 'belief' (*hāḏihī asmāʾu muḫtalifatu* [*at-taṣdīq, al-maʿrifah, al-iqrār, al-islām, al-yaqīn*] *wa-maʿnāhā wāḥidun huwa –l-īmān.* Ibid., 14.

[600] *hāḏā maʿnā fa-s-sābiqāti sabqan.* Quran 79:4 (an-Nāziʿāt). I have used Pickthall's translation here. It must be noted that this single instance of *maʿnā* in Muqātil's *Exegesis* should not be wholly relied upon. *Maʿnā* appears elsewhere in the current printed edition, but it tends to do so only in the quotations from later scholars such as al-Farrāʾ (Abū Zakarīyāʾ Yaḥyā b. Ziyād, d. 207/822) and Ṯaʿlab (Abū al-ʿAbbās Aḥmad b. Yaḥyā, d. 291/904) that have been interpolated into the text during the transmission process. Muqātil b. Sulaymān, *Tafsīr*, ed. ʿAbdallāh Maḥmūd Šiḥātah, 5 vols. (Cairo: al-Hayʾah al-Miṣrīyah al-ʿĀmmah li-l-Kitāb, 1979-1989). 4:574; Kees Versteegh, "Grammar and Exegesis: The Origins of Kufan Grammar and the *Tafsīr Muqātil*," *Der Islam* 67(1990): 220-224, 233; Vishanoff, *Islamic Hermeneutics*, 19. Examples are the gloss of the idea behind the word "base" as being "marked out like a sheep with a notched ear" in Quran 68:13 (al-Qalam) (*maʿnā zanīm…*) and the grammatical idea of futureness behind the perfect (*al-māḍī*) tense (*al-maʿnā mustqabal*) in Quran 7:50. Muqātil b. Sulaymān, *Tafsīr*, 1:520, 4:404; C. H. M. Versteegh, *Arabic Grammar and Qur'anic Exegesis in Early Islam* (Leiden: Brill, 1993). 96-99; Versteegh, "Grammar and Exegesis," 233.

knowledgable until he realises that the Quran has many aspects".[601] He then provides analysis of 176 Quranic words that each have between two and seventeen different aspects, which he enumerates and explains with examples from Quranic verses. For example, the word *al-ğabbār* has four different aspects (*ʿalā arbaʿati awğuhin*): God overpowering his creation or telling the Prophet that only God can overpower his creation;[602] unjust oppression by humans in the sense of unlawful killing;[603] arrogant neglect of the worship of God;[604] and the great extent of power.[605] There is no evidence of the sort of detailed theological engagement with the justification of God's oppression versus his justice that we saw in Ragib's analysis of the same word nearly 300 years later,[606] but Muqātil is clearly aware of, and intent on communicating, the fact that God used a single word to mean four different things in four different contexts.

Kufa and Basra were cities with tens of thousands of inhabitants at the time of Muqātil and Abū Ḥanīfah, yet we only have three or four of those inhabitants' books. On the one hand, this vacuum may lead us to assume incorrectly that our next scholar, Sībawayh, changed the face of Arabic intellectual history with a series of grammatical theories that made systematic and heavy use of the pairing of expression and idea. On the other, he may well have done so. He was

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[601] *lā yakūnu –r-raǧulu faqīhan kulla –l-fiqhi ḥattā yarā li-l-qurʾāni wuǧūhan kaṯīrah*. Muqātil b. Sulaymān, *al-Wuǧūh wa-n-Naẓāʾir*, 19. See also: Andrew Rippin, "Lexicographical texts and the Qurʾan," in *The Qurʾan and its Interpretative Tradition* (Aldershot: Ashgate Variorum, 2001), 167f; Wansborough, *Quranic Studies*, 208f.

[602] Quran 59:23 (al-Ḥašr): *al-ʿazīzu –l-ğabbār* and Quran 50:45 (Qāf): *mā anta ʿalayhim bi-ğabbār*.

[603] Quran 26:130 (aš-Šuʿarāʾ), in which the prophet Hūd asks his people whether they fight as oppressors, Quran 28:19 (al-Qaṣaṣ), in which Moses is asked whether he plans to become an oppressor, and Quran 40:35 (Ġāfir), in which God promises to seal the hearts of oppressors.

[604] Quran 19:14 (Maryam), in which John is not arrogant towards his parents, and Quran 19:32, in which Jesus says that he is not arrogant.

[605] Quran 5:22, in which Moses' people say that there is already a people of great strength in the Holy Land that he wants them to enter.

[606] See note 584.

certainly cited, commented upon, and exploited by the generations who followed him.[607] The

opening lines of his *al-Kitāb* (*The Book*) lay out the grammatical structure of the Arabic

language:

> words are either a noun, a verb, or a particle that conveys an *idea* while being neither noun
> nor verb. Examples of the noun are 'man' and 'horse'. Instances of the verb are taken from
> the *expression* of the events [that happen to] nouns…[608]

Sībawayh assumes that his readers are familiar with two levels of language: the level of ideas, in

which a particle such as 'and' (*wa*) can convey the idea of connection;[609] and the level of

expressions, upon which events that happen to nouns such as 'went' are expressed. Shortly after,

he describes how homonymy and synonymy are structured according to these two levels in a

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[607] If one is writing a history of Arabic grammar, then the problem is that:
> …we really only have the *Kitāb* to go on: evidence of previous scientific interest in Arabic is scanty, and in
> the end the most detailed information we have about grammar before Sībawayhi comes from his own book.

Michael Carter, *Sibawayhi* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2004). 2-3. Cf. Rafael Talmon, "Naḥwiyyūn in Sībawayhi's
Kitāb," *Zeitschrift für arabische Linguistik* 8(1982). However, if one's concern is the history of the Arabic language
itself, then Sībawayh's status is clearer. He was building on the pre-existing traditions of poetic transmission and the
variant readings of the Quran:
> Sibawayh inherited a linguistic tradition from a group of scholars already interested in the analysis of a pre-
> defined kind of Arabic. This nascent tradition obviously lacked the sophistication and robustness that would
> characterize it following Sibawayh; however, one cannot emphasize the matter strongly enough: Sibawayh
> did not begin from scratch. What he and the other early grammarians did was build around an already-
> established register of Arabic a sophisticated theoretical model of analysis.

Ahmad Al-Jallad, "Ancient Levantine Arabic: a reconstruction based on the earliest sources and the modern
dialects" (Ph.D. Thesis, Harvard University, 2012), 44.

[608] My emphasis. Abū Bišr ʿAmr b. ʿUṯmān Sībawayh, *Kitāb*, ed. ʿAbd as-Salām Muḥammad Hārūn, 5 vols. (Cairo:
Dār al-Qalam, 1966; repr., Beirut: Dār al-Ǧīl, 2000). 1:12 (1:2). References to the 1898-1900 Bulāq edition are
given in brackets. According to the grammatical tradition of commentaries on Sībawayh, the phrase "events of
nouns" (*aḥdāṯ al-asmāʾ*) refers to the verbal noun (*al-maṣdar*). See: Frank, "Meanings " 281.

[609] Such an 'idea' of connection has often been explained in the secondary literature as *maʿnā* referring to
grammatical function, rather than to lexical meaning, or underlying sense or purpose. For example: Carter,
Sibawayhi, 69-72; Versteegh, "The Arabic Tradition," 241-244. My position, as laid out in the Introduction
(especially at note 13), is that the different aspects of *maʿnā* in Sībawayh's work represent different functions
performed by the same concept (that of "idea" understood in opposition to "expression"), rather than
different/separate concepts.

section titled "The Relationship of the Expression to the Idea" (*Bāb al-Lafẓ li-l-Maʿnā*) ,which is translated here in its entirety:

> Know that their speech contains the variation of two expressions according to the variation of two ideas, the variation of two expressions while there is a single idea, and the agreement of two expressions while the two ideas differ. You will see this in what follows, God willing. Examples of the variation of two expressions according to the variation of two ideas are 'he sat' and 'he went'. Examples of the variation of two expressions while there is a single idea are 'he went' and 'he left'. Examples of the agreement of two expressions while the ideas differ are *waǧadta ʿalayhi* ('you were angry with him') with regard to anger and *waǧadta* ('you found') if you intended the finding of a lost sheep. There are many examples of this.[610]

"They" in the phrase "their speech" are Bedouin Arabs, whose use of Arabic Sībawayh, a native speaker of Persian, was engaged in recording and analysing. At the beginning of his comprehensive work on their language he addressed the existence of homonymy and synonymy in their vocabulary, and did so by using the pairing of expression and idea.[611] It was an analytical division of langauge into two spheres that would continue to function throughout the next millenium of Arabic-language scholarship, just as we have seen it at work in the opening lines of *al-Kitāb* quoted above.

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[610] Sībawayh, *Kitāb*, 1:24 (1:7-8).

[611] It should be noted that this passage (chapter four) is part of the seven-chapter introductory *Risālah* that comes at the start of *al-Kitāb*. The connection of this section to the rest of the *Kitāb* has been the subject of discussion. In a recent article, Noy has shown that at least one part of the *Risālah* (the sixth chapter on *muḥāl*) is inconsistent with the rest of the *Kitāb*, lending weight to the argument that the *Risālah* may represent the ideas that were established before Sībawayh, rather than his own analyses. In either case, for my purposes here the important thing is that *lafẓ* and *maʿnā* were used to analyse polysemy at a very early stage. Carter, *Sibawayhi*, 65-69; M. G. Carter, "The Origins of Arabic Grammar," in *The Early Islamic Grammatical Tradition*, ed. Ramzi Baalbakki (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2006), 7-9, 26; Avigail S. Noy, "Don't be absurd: the term *muḥāl* in Sībawayhi's *Kitāb*," in *Sībawayhi and Early Arabic Grammatical Theory*, ed. Amal Elesha Marog (Leiden: Brill, forthcoming); Gregor Schoeler, *The Oral and the Written in Early Islam*, ed. James Montgomery (New York: Routledge, 2006). 20, 49; Talmon, "Naḥwiyyūn," 18 (note 20); Versteegh, *Greek Elements*, 17 (note 78).

Sībawayh also deals with semantic extension and brevity in terms of expression and idea. He devotes a section to Bedouin Arab use of verbal expressions that were out of kilter with their usual ideas, usually for the sake of concision.[612] He gives examples from Bedouin speech,[613] the Quran,[614] and poetry.[615] In all these cases, expressions that are intended to be understood are omitted, leaving a set of expressions that on its own does not convey the intent of the speaker. In order for the intent to be clear, and for the complete idea to be conveyed, the audience needs to know what is going on. The audience would know what was going on either because they were used to this Bedouin Arab speech practice and understood the full idea behind the limited expressions, or because they had read Sībawayh's book in order to familiarise themselves with such idioms. As Sībawayh puts it, the idea can "come according to semantic extension and brevity because of the audience's knowledge of the idea".[616]

Semantic extension is a situation in which the one-to-one correspondence between ideas and expression breaks down, and there is more going on at the level of the ideas than is directly represented on the level of the expressions.[617] According to Quṭrub (Abū ʿAlī Muḥammad b. al-

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[612] The section title is "the use of the verb according to the expression rather than according to the idea, because of Bedouin Arab speech's semantic extension, brevity, and abbreviation" (*hādā bābu -stiʿmāli -l-fiʿli fī-l-lafẓi lā fī-l-maʿnā li-ittisāʿihim fī-l-kalāmi wa-l-īğāzi wa-l-iḫtiṣār*). Sībawayh, *Kitāb*, 1:211-216 (1:108-110). Cf. Kees Versteegh, "Freedom of the Speaker? The term *ittisāʿ* and related notions in Arabic Grammar," in *Studies in the History of Arabic Grammar II*, ed. Michael Carter and Kees Versteegh (Amsterdam: J. Benjamins, 1990).

[613] For example, for the phrase "two days were hunted on his account" (*ṣīda ʿalayhi yawmāni*) "the idea is in fact 'the wild beast was hunted on his account for two days' but the speaker has used semantic extension and abbreviated" (*wa-innamā –l-maʿnā ṣīda ʿalayhi –l-waḥšu fī yawmayni*). Sībawayh, *Kitāb*, 1:211 (1:108).

[614] For example, in Quran 12:82 (Yūsuf): "ask the village" (*wa-sʾal –l-qaryata*) God "really intended 'the people of the village' but he abbreviated…" (*wa-innamā yurīdu ahla –l-qaryata fa-ḫtaṣara*). Ibid., 1:212 (1:109).

[615] For example, a line by Sāʿidah b. Ğuʾayyah al-Huḏalī (seventh century) includes the phrase "the fox kept close the path" by which "he intends 'to the path'" (*ʿasala -ṭ-ṭarīqa aṯ-ṯaʿlabu yurīdu fī-ṭ-ṭarīq*). Ibid., 1:214 (1:109).

[616] *ğāʾa ʿalā siʿati –l-kalāmi wa-l-īğāzi li-ʿilmi –l-muḫāṭabi bi-l-maʿnā*. Ibid., 1:212 (1:109).

[617] Versteegh is right to point out that it is comparable to the distinction between literal and non-literal language that we have discussed above, in which non-literal language (*mağāz*) represents all and any deviations from strict one-to-

Mustanīr, eighth century and likely a contemporary of Sībawayh in Basra), it was the motivation for Bedouin Arabs' use of synonymy. Quṭrub gives the same three-part presentation of separate words, synonyms, and homonyms as Sībawayh, with additional examples in each category. He says that Bedouin Arabs used synonyms "to expand their speech and their expressions, just as they would alter the metre of their poetry in order to expand its structure without having to adhere to a single scheme".[618] Quṭrub evaluates semantic extension alongside the manipulation of metre as ways in which Bedouin Arabs would exploit the flexibility inherent in synonymy and metrics in order to make their language more eloquent. This is an early recognition that eloquence and creativity could be the result when the one-to-one correspondence between expression and idea broke down.

Creativity apart, this was an intellectual culture still in its infancy, and a great deal of taxonomical work still needed to be done only two hundred years or so after the birth of the Islamic community. This taxonomical work is reflected in the composition of Quṭrub's from which I have just quoted. It is a collection of 207 Arabic words in which the expression can refer to two opposite meanings (aḍdād, enantiosemy), a subsection of homonymy. They vary from commonplace dialectical variations such as ṯib meaning "sit" in Ḥimyaritic and "jump" in

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one correspondence. However, Sībawayh was describing the language that he found in Basra, not theorising about the origin of all human language. As we saw above, the distinction between literal and non-literal is made on the basis of the coinage of the language by divine fiat, and no such consideration is at play in Sībawayh's grammar. Versteegh, "Freedom of the Speaker?," 283f.

[618] *wa-ka-annahum innamā arādū bi-ḫtilāfi –l-lafẓayni wa-in kāna wāḥidan muġrīyan* [Ḥaddād has *maġzīyan* (sic.)] *an yūsiʿū* [Ḥaddād has *yuwassiʿū*] *fī-kalāmihim wa-alfāẓihim ka-mā zāḥafū fī ašʿārihim li-yatawassaʿū fī abniyatihā wa-lā yalzamū amran wāḥidan*. Hans Kofler, "Das Kitāb al-Aḍdād von Abū ʿAlī Quṭrub ibn al-Mustanīr. Herausgegeben von Hans Kofler," *Islamica* 5, no. 3 (1931-1932): 243-244; Abū ʿAlī Muḥammad b. al-Mustanīr Quṭrub, *Kitāb al-Aḍdād*, ed. Ḥannā Ḥaddād (Riyad: Dār al-ʿUlūm, 1984). 69-70. Cf. Abū Bakr Muḥammad b. al-Qāsim Ibn al-Anbārī, *Kitāb al-Aḍdād*, ed. Muḥammmad Abū al-Faḍl Ibrāhīm (Kuwait: Dāʾirat al-Maṭbūʿāt wa-n-Našr fī-l-Kuwait, 1960). 8. See also: Kees Versteegh, "The Linguistic Introduction to Rāzī's *Tafsīr*," in *Studies in Near Eastern Languages and Literatures: Memorial Volume of Karel Petráček*, ed. Petr Zemánek (Prague: Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic, 1996), 595.

Arabic,[619] to discussions of meaning that have explicit theological implications. For example, Quṭrub writes that the verb *ẓanna* ("to think") can refer to either certainty or doubt. When God uses the verb *ẓanna* in the Quran for the words of those who enter heaven on the day of judgement: "I thought that I would indeed meet my reckoning", then "this is certainty, and were it to be doubt, then the idea would be impermissable and would constitute unbelief. But it is certainty".[620]

Therefore, in the very first book on words with two or more opposite meanings the pattern is established. The polysemy inherent in language offers a hermeneutical opportunity that enables scholars to deal with theological difficulties. There would be many more works of this nature written in the decades to come.

The Great Men of the Arabic Tradition[621]

With the major figures of aš-Šāfiʿī and al-Ǧāḥiẓ our story emerges into a world of more established texts, better-understood contexts, and more secondary literature. The recent work of Joseph Lowry, James Montgomery, David Vishanoff, Ahmed El-Shamsy,[622] and others gives us

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[619] Kofler, "Das Kitāb al-Aḍdād," 264; Quṭrub, *Kitāb al-Aḍdād*, 118. See note 365 for Ibn Fāris and as-Suyūṭī's repetition of this report.

[620] Quran 69:20 (al-Ḥāqqah): *innī ẓanantu annī mulāqin ḥisābīyah*. Quṭrub writes: *fa-hāḏā yaqīnun wa-law kāna ḏālika šakkan lam yaǧuz fī-hāḏā –l-maʿnā wa-kāna kufran wa-lākinnahū yaqīn*. Kofler, "Das Kitāb al-Aḍdād," 244; Quṭrub, *Kitāb al-Aḍdād*, 71.

[621] With tongue in cheek, *pace* Thomas Carlyle ("[t]he history of what man has accomplished in this world, is at bottom the History of the Great Men who have worked here"). Thomas Carlyle, *On Heroes, Hero-Worship, and the Heroic in History* (London: Chapman and Hall, 1840). 3.

[622] For example: El Shamsy, "Tradition to Law."; Lowry, *Early Islamic Legal Theory*; James E. Montgomery, "Al-Jāḥiẓ's *Kitāb al-Bayān wa al-Tabyīn*," in *Writing and Representation in Medieval Islam : Muslim horizons*, ed. Julia Bray (New York: Routledge, 2006); ———, "Speech and Nature 1."; ———, "Speech and Nature: al-Jāḥiẓ, *Kitāb al-Bayān wa-l-Tabyīn*, 2.175-207, Part 2," *Middle Eastern Literatures* 12, no. 1 (2008); ———, "Speech and Nature: al-Jāḥiẓ, *Kitāb al-Bayān wa-l-Tabyīn*, 2.175-207, Part 3," *Middle Eastern Literatures* 12, no. 2 (2008); ———, "Speech and Nature: al-Jāhiz, *Kitāb al-Bayān wa-l-Tabyīn*, 2.175-207, Part 4," *Middle Eastern Literatures* 12, no. 3 (2009); Vishanoff, *Islamic Hermeneutics*.

a relatively clear picture of the intellectual culture at the turn of the eighth and ninth centuries, whereas the intellectual context from which Sībawayh had produced *al-Kitāb* remains shrouded in relative mystery.

Aš-Šāfiʿī is a foundational figure of Islamic law, standing close to the very beginning of legal history in Arabic.[623] He wrote that:

> God addressed the Arabs with his book in their language. He did so because the Arabs knew the ideas behind their language.[624] They knew that the language had semantic breadth (*ittisāʿ*), and that it was in God's nature to address them in the Quran with explicit language of general application (*ʿāmman ẓāhiran*) while intending that language to be indeed explicit, unrestricted, and independent of the words around it, or alternatively intending the explicit and unrestricted language to contain specificity (*al-ḫāṣṣ*) that rested on the surrounding words, or intending the explicit and unrestricted language to be in fact specific, or intending explicit language to be non-explicit, this being known from its context.
>
> The Arabs begin their speech with expressions that clarify what follows, and they begin speech with expressions that need to be clarified by what follows.
>
> The Arabs say something and they make the idea behind it understood without this being manifest in the expression.[625] This is comparable to the way that they indicate something with a physical gesture. They consider this way of speaking to be the most elevated, because only those who know it can do it and those who are ignorant of it cannot.
>
> The Arabs call a single thing many names, and they call many ideas with a single name.[626]

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[623] See Lowry, *Early Islamic Legal Theory*, 2.

[624] *innamā ḫāṭaba –llāhu bi-kitābihī –l-ʿaraba bi-lisānihā ʿalā mā taʿrifu min maʿānīhā.*

[625] *wa-takallamu bi-š-šayʾi tuʿarrifuhū bi-l-maʿnā dūna –l-īḍāḥi bi-l-lafẓ.*

[626] *wa-tusammā –š-šayʿa –l-wāḥida bi-l-asmāʾi –l-kaṯīrati wa-tusammā bi-l-ismi –l-wāḥidi –l-maʿānī –l-kaṯīrah.* aš-Šāfiʿī, *ar-Risālah*, 51-52 (#s173-176). This passage is translated and analysed by El-Shamsy, Lowry, Montgomery, and Vishanoff, and I have profited from their efforts. El Shamsy, "Tradition to Law," 58-59; Lowry, *Early Islamic Legal Theory*, 253; Montgomery, "*al-Bayān wa al-Tabyīn*," 105-106; aš-Šāfiʿī, *ar-Risālah*, 51-52 (#173f); Vishanoff, *Islamic Hermeneutics*, 46.

A civilizationally-specific programme is in operation. Aš-Šāfiʿī describes how God spoke ambiguously to his chosen people the Arabs in his revelation, confident in the knowledge that they would be able to understand the Quran because they were already talking to each other in allusions and ellipses. Polysemy was a fact of Arabic, and aš-Šāfiʿī, as a member of the Arabic-language community, was confident in his ability to negotiate the apparent ambiguity that it caused.[627] Arabic language "carries multiple potential ideas" (*muḥtamilan li-l-maʿānī*),[628] and key terms can be homonymous: the word *bayān* (clear, clarity) is a "noun comprising several convergent basic ideas which are, however, divergent in their details".[629] This description of homonymy as a noun that comprises (*ismun ǧāmiʿun*) ideas had already appeared in the work of Abū Ḥanīfah.[630]

Montgomery and Lowry agree that al-Ǧāḥiẓ, whose discussions of expression and idea we have already encountered, was aware of and engaged with aš-Šāfiʿī's *ar-Risālah*.[631] Al-Ǧāḥiẓ repeats aš-Šāfiʿī's definition of *bayān*, albeit in somewhat more evocative language: "*bayān* is a noun that comprises everything that throws open to you the veil of the idea".[632] This comes in a section that started with the statement that ideas "subsist in the hearts of people, conceived in

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[627] Vishanoff argues productively that ambiguity is "the central theme" of aš-Šāfiʿī's *Risālah*. ———, *Islamic Hermeneutics*, 15-65, 51, 238.

[628] aš-Šāfiʿī, *ar-Risālah*, 222 (#613). Cf. Lowry, *Early Islamic Legal Theory*, 253.

[629] *wa-l-bayānu ismun ǧāmiʿun li-maʿānin muǧtamiʿati –l-uṣūli mutašaʿʿiti –l-furūʿ*. The translation is Lowry's, with "ideas" substituted for his "meanings". ———, *Early Islamic Legal Theory*, 25; aš-Šāfiʿī, *ar-Risālah*, 21 (#53).,

[630] See note 599. Another term of aš-Šāfiʿī's, *ǧumlah*, is more central to the *Risālah's* discussion of ambiguity. It is opposed to *naṣṣ* (unambiguous and self-sufficient) and means language that in itself gathers together (*ǧamala*) multiple interpretative options. It has been analysed by Vishanoff as an aspect of polysemy, but Lowry's suggestion that it refers to the need to gather the text together with the other texts required to understand it is persuasive. Lowry, *Early Islamic Legal Theory*, 104f (note 80); Vishanoff, *Islamic Hermeneutics*, 55f.

[631] See note 528. Lowry, *Early Islamic Legal Theory*, 51f; Montgomery, "*al-Bayān wa al-Tabyīn*," 102f.

[632] *wa-l-bayānu –smun ǧāmiʿun li-kulli šayʾin kašafa laka qināʿa –l-maʿnā*. al-Ǧāḥiẓ, *al-Bayān wa-t-Tabyīn*, 1:76; Lowry, *Early Islamic Legal Theory*, 52.

their minds",[633] and he then says that there are five ways in which these ideas are indicated, of which the expression (*al-lafẓ*) is only one. The other four are the physical gesture (*al-išārah*), counting with numbers (*al-ʿaqd*), writing (*al-ḫaṭṭ*), and context (*al-ḥālu –llatī tusammā nisbatan*).[634] Elsewhere, in the context of God teaching language to Adam, al-Ǧāḥiẓ writes that a name (*ism*) must consist of the combination of an expression and an idea for it to be meaningful.[635] The implication is exactly that laid out by Ragib centuries later: language is the combination of expressions and ideas.[636]

The difference between aš-Šāfiʿī and al-Ǧāḥiẓ, as Montgomery and Lowry are aware,[637] is that the former is working on a hermeneutic for the interpretation of divine revelation while the latter is putting forward a theory of communication that applies to both humans and God. Montgomery attributes this difference to al-Ǧāḥiẓ's greater regard for the role of human reason, but I would rather place weight on their respective genres. *Adab* works inevitably pull in quotations and ideas from a broad range of disciplines, but more importantly it is the very ideal

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[633] *al-maʿānī –l-qāʾimatu fī ṣudūri –n-nāsi –l-mutaṣawwaratu fī aḏhānihim*. al-Ǧāḥiẓ, *al-Bayān wa-t-Tabyīn*, 1:75.

[634] Ibid., 1:76.

[635] *wa-l-smu bi-lā maʿnan laġwun … wa-lā yakūnu –l-lafẓu -sman illā wa-huwa muḍammanun bi-maʿnan wa-qad yakūnu –l-maʿnā wa-lā –sma lahū wa-lā yakūnu –smun illā wa-lahū maʿnan*. ———, "Risālah fī-l-Ǧidd wa-l-Hazl," in *Rasāʾil al-Ǧāḥiẓ*, ed. ʿAbd as-Salām Muḥammad Hārūn (Cairo: Maktabat al-Ḫānǧī, 1965). Cf. Behzadi, *Sprache und Verstehen*, 110-111. I believe that Naṣr Ḥāmid Abū Zayd misreads al-Ǧāḥiẓ here, writing that if the *ism* must contain a *maʿnā* then "we can infer that al-Ǧāḥiẓ uses *maʿnā* to refer to the *relationship* between the *ism* and the *musammā*" (my emphasis). However, as al-Ǧāḥiẓ has already said (see note 633), ideas are in people's minds. It is intent that makes the connections between ideas and external physical reality. Abū Zayd, *al-Ittiǧāh al-ʿAqlī fī-t-Tafsīr*, 84-85; Larkin, *The Theology of Meaning*, 33.

[636] My discussion of Ragib's position on the composition of language started at page 109, and my translation of his discussion of God teaching language to Adam at page 123.

[637] Lowry writes that "[t]he relationship between Jāḥiẓ's discussion of the *bayān* and that of Shāfiʿī remains puzzling, however, since Shāfiʿī focuses on revealed texts, and Jāḥiẓ on … a general theory of communication". Lowry, *Early Islamic Legal Theory*, 54. Montgomery describes the difference as being between aš-Šāfiʿī's "salvationist deontology" (thereby focusing on the purpose of his hermeneutic) and al-Ǧāḥiẓ's "axiology – a theory of ultimate values – in which man's reasoning intellect dominates: man has to decide how he should live". Montgomery, "al-Bayān wa al-Tabyīn," 103.

of language excellence and language performance that lies at the heart of *adab* itself: to be an *adīb* is to not just know things, but to *say* them and say them well. This concern forces al-Ǧāḥiẓ, and Ragib over a century later, to deal with language as something that is produced as well as something that is interpreted. Aš-Šāfiʿī had no such motivation, but hermeneutics was difficult enough on its own.

Whatever the divisions of genre and scope, everyone agreed that language could be ambiguous and that polysemy was an inevitable part of that ambiguity. A consensus was also starting to develop that the primary epistemological tool for dealing with the resultant problems was the pairing of expression and idea. Sībawayh used *lafẓ* and *maʿnā* to explain homonymy and synonymy, but as we can see from Abū Ḥanīfah, Muqātil, aš-Šāfiʿī, and others, this terminology was not uniform. Abū Ḥanīfah and aš-Šāfiʿī discussed homonymy by pairing "idea" (*maʿnā*) with "word" (*ism*). Aš-Šāfiʿī used the pairing of expression (*lafẓ*) and idea when he was dealing with Hadith: the transmission of reports of what the Prophet said can be accurate right down to the expressions themselves (*lafẓ*), or just accurate with regard to the ideas behind the expressions (*maʿnā*).[638]

The pairing of expression and idea that Sībawayh used to describe single words and their polysemy therefore works for Hadith just as well as it works for poetry. And aš-Šāfiʿī used expression and idea to deal with both.[639] This means that by the first few decades of the ninth century, the core of the Arabic Language Tradition had been established and was in wide

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[638] Lowry, *Early Islamic Legal Theory*, 110, 127, 254; aš-Šāfiʿī, *ar-Risālah*, 267-272 (#s737-748).

[639] For example, when explaining that *šaṭr* (direction) in Quran 2:150 means *ǧihah* (the same) he cites four lines of poetry containing the word *šaṭr* from early and pre-Islamic poets and notes that *šaṭr*, *ǧihah*, and *tilqāʾ* "are all a single idea albeit expressed by different expressions" (*wa-inna kullahā maʿnan wāḥidan wa-in kānat bi-alfāẓin muḫtalifah*). ———, *ar-Risālah*, 34f (#105f). Cf. Montgomery's argument that this constituted a challenge to the "antiquarian study by philologists and grammarians of the poetry of the desert Arabs". Montgomery, "*al-Bayān wa al-Tabyīn*," 104.

circulation. Language was assumed to be ambiguous, and its ambiguity was conceived of

through the duality of expressions and ideas. This was true whether one was writing literature or

law. Our next two figures, Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal and Ibn Qutaybah, show what scholars started to

do with these concepts.

Ibn Ḥanbal, like aš-Šāfiʿī, used the pairing of expression and idea for the wording of a

Hadith and the idea behind it: "this is the exact wording of ʿAbdallāh b. Ṣandal's Hadith, and the

idea behind both these expressions and his is the same".[640] When it came to theology, and his

famous interrogation by the political authorities about the created or uncreated status of the

Quran:

> Ibn Ḥanbal's polemic strategy was to demonstrate that his opponents quoted problematic
> verses which had multiple meanings and therefore could not be used as proof … Thus, he
> sought to expose the multiple meanings or lack of clarity of these verses.[641]

Nimrod Hurvitz put this well. Ibn Ḥanbal assumed, and exploited, linguistic ambiguity. As we

have seen, by the mid-ninth century the intellectual culture in which he was working was used to

doing the same. The Muʿtazilī interrogators of Ibn Ḥanbal assumed that words were not

ambiguous: they cited Quran 43:3 (az-Zuḫruf) "we made it a Quran" and asked "isn't everything

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[640] *hāḏā lafẓu ḥadīṯi ʿAbdallāh b. Ṣandal wa-maʿnāhumā wāḥid*. Ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad 1895*, 1:148; ———, *Musnad*, ed. Šuʿayb al-Arnaʾūṭ and ʿĀdil Muršid, 50 vols. (Beirut: Muʾassasat ar-Risālah, 2001). 2:413. Also, for example: *maʿnā ḥadīṯ* so-and-so (the idea behind so-and-so's Hadith). ———, *Musnad 1895*, 1:76, 1:42, 1:60; ———, *Musnad 2001*, 1:204, 1:388, 1:485. Or *lafẓ* so-and-so (the exact wording of so-and-so's transmission of this Hadith). ———, *Musnad 1895*, 1:133, 1:135; ———, *Musnad 2001*, 2:344, 2:353.

[641] Hurvitz, *The Formation of Ḥanbalism*, 141. The work in question (Ibn Ḥanbal, "ar-Radd," 69-72.) was written by Ibn Ḥanbal's son, ʿAbdallāh b. Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. Ḥanbal (Abū ʿAbd ar-Raḥmān, d. 290/903). Livnat Holtzman's citation of both aḏ-Ḏāhabī's statement that it was incorrectly attributed (*mawḍūʿ*) to Ibn Ḥanbal and aḏ-Ḏāhabī's editor Šuʿayb al-Arnaʾūṭ's agreement with that judgement implies a greater risk of unreliability than is in fact the case. Ad-Ḏāhabī himself does not equivocate in the slightest in his attribution of it to ʿAbdallāh, who like his father was an eighth-century scholar. ad-Ḏahabī, *Siyar*, 11:287, 13:523; Livnat Holtzman, "Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal," in *Encyclopaedia of Islam, THREE*, ed. Gudrun Krämer, Denis Matringe, John Nawas, and Everett Rowson (Brill Online: Brill, 2011); Hurvitz, *The Formation of Ḥanbalism*, 4. For an example of what may be switches in voice between father and son (*qāla –l-imāmu Aḥmad … fa-kāna mimmā balaġanā …*), see: Ibn Ḥanbal, "ar-Radd," 64-65.

that is made created?" Ibn Ḥanbal cited Quran 21:58 "we made them into fragments" and Quran 105:5 (al-Fīl) "he made them into dry eaten leaves of corn" and asked "did he create them? Is every made thing a created thing? How can the Quran be created when [we know from 'we made it a Quran' that] it was made beforehand?" The interrogator, a judge who believed the Quran to be created, was silent in the face of this exploitation of polysemy.[642]

Ibn Qutaybah is a tremendously important figure.[643] His is the first ouevre we have seen in this chapter that combines grammar, lexicography, theology, exegesis, law, *adab*, Hadith, and poetics. It is a range of intellectual interests that (with the exception of Hadith) mirrors Ragib's, and the two scholars, separated by over a century, share a certain orientation within the disciplines in which they worked. Ibn Qutaybah, like Ragib, saw himself as subscribing to a traditional way of thinking that had started with Ibn Ḥanbal, rejected theology as both needlessly innovative and incoherent, nevertheless was prepared to engage in theological reasoning, and maintained a belief in the need for unquestioning acceptance of certain unknowable aspects of the divine.[644]

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[642] *a-fa-ḫalaqahum a-fa-kullu magʿūlin maḫlūqun kayfa yakūnu maḫlūqan wa-qad kāna qabla an yuḫlaqa –l-ğaʿlu fa-amsak*. Ḥanbal b. Isḥāq, *Ḏikr Miḥnat al-Imām Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal*, ed. Muḥammad Naġaš (Cairo: Dār Našr aṯ-Ṯaqāfah, 1983). 53-54. The judge was Šuʿayb b. Sahl. This passage is discussed at: Hurvitz, *The Formation of Ḥanbalism*, 125-126, 138-139. *Pace* Frank, who accuses the Ḥanābilah traditionalists of having scarcely "any formal analysis at all". Frank, "Elements`," 173.

[643] G. Lecomte, "Ibn Ḳutayba, Abū Muḥammad ʿAbd Allāh b. Muslim al-Dīnawarī," in *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*, ed. P. Bearman, Th. Bianquis, C.E. Bosworth, E. van Donzel, and W.P. Heinrichs (Brill Online: Brill, 2012); ———, *Ibn Qutayba, L'homme, son oeuvre, ses idées* (Damascus: Institut Francais de Damas, 1965); Joseph E. Lowry, "The Legal Hermeneutics of al-Shāfiʿī and Ibn Qutayba: A Reconsideration," *Islamic Law and Society* 11, no. 1 (2004).

[644] In his *al-Iḫtilāf fī-l-Lafẓ wa-r-Radd ʿalā al-Ğahmīyah wa-l-Mušabbihah* (*The Disagreement about the Expression [of the Quran] and the Rebuttal of the Followers of Ğahm and the Anthropomorphists*) Ibn Qutaybah praises the *ahl al-ḥadīṯ*, notes that despite their good qualities they remain divided over the status of human expressions of the Quran, both apologises for and stresses the need for the subsequent theological discussion, states that predestination is God's secret, and stresses that the justice that applies between humans cannot be applied to God. Abū Muḥammad ʿAbdallāh Ibn Qutaybah, "al-Iḫtilāf fī-l-Lafẓ wa-r-Radd ʿalā al-Ğahmīyah wa-l-Mušabbihah," in *ʿAqāʾid as-Salaf*, ed. ʿAlī Sāmī an-Naššār and ʿAmmār aṭ-Ṭālibī (Alexandria: al-Maʿārif, 1971), 224-226. As we have seen above,

Ibn Qutaybah uses polysemy, and an assumed theory of meaning in which intent links expression and idea, to solve certain hermeneutical problems. The question of whether or not human expressions (i.e. vocalizations, *alfāẓ*) of the words of the Quran are created is solved as follows:

> The mean position with regard to the disagreement about the recitation and the expression of the Quran is that 'recitation' is a single expression comprising two ideas. One idea is the action of reciting, and the other idea is 'Quran' … the Quran subsists in the action of recitation and that action is the movement of the tongue and the mouth *with* the Quran, an action that is created. The thing that is being recited *is* the Quran, and it is uncreated.[645]

Ibn Qutaybah continues with an analogy in which two men take their quarrel over whether a hot coal is a "fire" or "a substance" to a jurist who says to each one of them in turn: "you are correct, but the thing that you mention has two ideas and you have only used one of them". Ibn Qutaybah concludes that "the 'hot coal' is like the 'recitation' because it is a name that gathers together two meanings".[646] The argument is therefore a lexicographical one: there are words that mean more than one thing, and we have identified them. Sure enough, in his manual on language usage for the scribal class, *Adab al-Kātib*, Ibn Qutaybah has a section on the *aḍdād* ("calling two

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Ragib makes many of the same points. For example, that predestination is God's secret: note 334.

[645] My emphasis.
   wa-ʿadlu –l-qawli fīmā –ḫtalafū fīhi min –l-qirāʾati wa-l-lafẓi bi-l-qurʾāni anna –l-qirāʾata lafẓun wāḥidun yaštamilu ʿalā maʿnīyayni aḥaduhumā ʿamalun wa-l-āḫiru qurʾānun ... wa-huwa bi-l-ʿamali fī-l-qirāʾati qāʾimun wa-l-ʿamalu taḥrīku –l-lisāni wa-l-lahawāti (a more exact translation of which is "the uvulas") *bi-l-qurʾāni wa-huwa maḫlūqun wa-l-maqrūʾu qurʾānun wa-huwa ġayru maḫlūq.*

Ibid., 248. The arguments over *lafẓ al-qurʾān* were indeed an internal Ḥanbalī dispute, evocatively described by Hurvitz as an internal purge following their victory over the Muʿtazilah. Hurvitz, *The Formation of Ḥanbalism*, 152-157.

[646] *...ṣadaqta walākin ḏakarta šayʾan ḏā maʿnīyayni bi-aḥadi maʿnīyayhi fa-l-ğamratu maṯalun li-l-qirāʾati li-annahā –smun wāḥidun yağmaʿu maʿnīyayni –l-ğismu wa-n-nār.* Ibn Qutaybah, "al-Iḫtilāf fī-l-Lafẓ," 249.

opposite things with a single name") that enumerates them in order to enable proper usage and avoid confusion.[647]

However, Ibn Qutaybah does not use the pairing of expression and idea to describe the *aḍdād*, and the theory of meaning constituted by that pairing does not dominate his hermeneutical work. This is despite the fact that his two books *Taʾwīl Muḫtalif al-Ḥadīṯ* and *Taʾwīl Muškil al-Qurʾān*, on the interpretation of controversial Hadith and difficult Quran respectively, explicitly aim to manage and negotiate linguistic ambiguity. Although in the work on Hadith he uses *maʿnā* for the idea behind a Quranic verse or Hadith, and explains the intensity of friendship referred to in a phrase as: "he did not intend, with this speech act [x] … but rather he intended [y] …",[648] the theory of meaning therein is by no means central to his hermeneutic and the terms *lafẓ* and *maʿnā* never appear together.[649] The same is true of his work on the Quran, where *maʿnā* is the idea behind a speech act, a Quranic verse, or the grammatical function of a word and the term *lafẓ* appears sporadically in the same contexts.[650]

The potential of the pairing of expression and idea is only realised in Ibn Qutaybah's *adab* and his poetics. Specifically, it is realised in contexts where Ibn Qutaybah lays out the structure of a field of enquiry. In the section of his *adab* manual devoted to correcting linguistic error he explains near-synonymy, near-homonymy, and the relationships of grammatical functions to

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[647] ———, *Adab al-Kātib*, ed. Max Grünert (Leiden: Brill, 1900; repr., Beirut: Dār Ṣādir, 1967). 230-233.

[648] *...lā yurīdu bi-hāḏā –l-qawli maʿnā ṣuḥbati aṣḥābihī ... wa-innamā yurīdu annahū…* ———, *Taʾwīl Muḫtalif al-Ḥadīṯ*, 92. Cf. Ibid., 116, 168.

[649] This observation is borne out by Lowry, "Legal Hermeneutics."

[650] For example: "people would err with regard to both the expression[s] of that line of poetry, and the idea behind it" (*an-nāsu yaġlaṭūna fī-lafẓi hāḏā –l-bayti wa-maʿnāhu*). Ibn Qutaybah, *Taʾwīl Muškil al-Qurʾān*, 96. Cf. Ibid., 280f.

morphology by tracking variations on the level of expressions, and then on the level of ideas.[651]

In the critical introduction to his poetic anthology he divides poetry into four, according to the quality of the expressions and the quality of the ideas. Poets achieve success in both expression and idea, or they fail because either their expressions are beautiful while the ideas behind them are vapid, or their ideas are powerful but the expressions fail to do them justice, or finally both their expressions and ideas are defective.[652]

This use of the pairing of expression and idea is significant. It is the first time in this narrative that we have seen the binary used as a way to structure one's thoughts and to explain the way that mind and language interact. The pairing is moving from being a terminological assumption used in thinking about grammar, or a conceptual assumption about polysemy that assists with hermeneutics, to being a theory of meaning in the full sense of the word "theory": "[a] conception or mental scheme of something to be done".[653] My reading here is confirmed by the way that Ibn Qutaybah introduced his division of poetry: "I have *contemplated* poetry and subsequently found it to be of four types".[654]

The Theorists

Sībawayh's fully-formed theory of syntax and morphology simply assumed that the pairing of expression and idea was the appropriate way to understand the difference between the word on

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[651] Near synonymy is when both the expressions and their ideas are similar and there is potential for confusion, and near-homonymy is when the expressions are similar but the ideas are different. ———, *Adab al-Kātib*, 333f.

[652] *ḍarbun minhu ḥasuna lafẓuhū wa-ǧāda maʿnāhu ... wa-ḍarbun minhu ḥasuna lafẓuhū wa-ḫalā fa-iḏā anta fattaštahū lam taǧid hunāka fāʾidatan fī-l-maʿnā ... wa-ḍarbun minhu ǧāda maʿnāhu wa-qaṣṣarat alfāẓuhū ʿanhu ... wa-ḍarbun minhu taʾaḫḫara maʿnāhu wa-taʾāḫḫara lafẓuhū.* ———, *aš-Šiʿr wa-š-Šuʿarāʾ*, 2 in 1 vols. (Beirut: Dār aṯ-Ṯaqāfah, 1964). 12-15.

[653] "Theory, n.1," in *OED Online* (Oxford University Press, June 2011).

[654] My emphasis. *tadabbartu –š-šiʿra fa-waǧadtuhū arbaʿata aḍrub.* ———, *aš-Šiʿr wa-š-Šuʿarāʾ*, 12.

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page or lips, and the grammatical function it performed. His contemporaries working on theology and scripture assumed that the exploitation of linguistic ambiguity was a legitimate hermeneutic. Poetry was ever-present in grammar, theology, and exegesis throughout the first centuries of Islamicate intellectual endeavour, both as a source of linguistic precedent, and as a catalyst for thinking about language and imagery. For example, Abū al-ʿAmayṭal (ʿAbdallāh b. Ḫulayd, d. 240/854) was both a successful poet and, at the same time, the author of a work on homonymy that enumerated the different meanings of over three hundred words with poetic examples. It is not hard to imagine that this work of lexicography was designed to facilitate the imagination and wordplay of poets, including himself.[655]

Sībawayh's fully-formed theory of grammar, containing a theory of meaning based on expression and idea, appears to have come out of a vacuum. In the absence of further manuscript discoveries, or sources that will allow us to identify the shadowy "grammarians" he mentioned in *al-Kitāb*, all we know with relative certainty is that the culture the Islamic conquests brought out of the Arabian desert and into the new garrison towns of Kufa and Basra was a literary one, with a well-developed tradition of poetry at its political and artistic core. Little more than a century after those two towns were founded, that literary culture was engaged in the production of theory.

In subsequent centuries, when theories began to be constructed outside the discipline of grammar, they were naturally influenced by the language-obsessed culture in which they grew. For example, aš-Šāfiʿī took the oratory and poetry of the Bedouin Arabs as proof of a linguistic

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[655] "Abu'l-ʿAmayṯhal, ʿAbd Allāh b. Ḵhulayd b. Saʿd," in *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*, ed. P. Bearman, Th. Bianquis, C.E. Bosworth, E. van Donzel, and W.P. Heinrichs (Brill Online: Brill, 2012); Abū al-ʿAmayṭal al-Aʿrābī, *Kitāb al-Maʾṯūr min al-Luġah (mā ittafaq lafẓuhū wa-ḫtalaf maʿnāhu)*, ed. Muḥammad ʿAbd al-Qādir Aḥmad (Cairo: Maktabat an-Naḥḍah al-Miṣrīyah, 1988); Reinhard Weipert, "Abū l-ʿAmayṯhal," in *Encyclopaedia of Islam, THREE*, ed. Gudrun Krämer, Denis Matringe, John Nawas, and Everett Rowson (Brill Online: Brill, 2012). Cf. Ragib, *Littérateurs' Ripostes*, 1:629-630, 1:646.

ambiguity that he made into the central claim, and the primary recourse, of his legal hermeneutic. In Ibn Qutaybah's theory of poetic quality we have one of the first attempts to bring taxonomical and methodological coherence to poetry in the same way that aš-Šāfiʿī had brought it to the derivation of the law. A new stage of intellectual production was beginning, and theories were becoming more popular. Instead of the reactive hermeneutics of early theologians such as Abū Ḥanīfah and the exegetical and Hadith work of even Ibn Qutaybah, and in place of the free-wheeling associative *adab* with its hidden and subtle structures of al-Ǧāḥiẓ, we have organised conscious reflection on disciplines, their contents, and the theories necessary to make sense of them.[656]

In the works of the scholars of the tenth century there are arguments about which theories of language are best. Take, for example, Ibn Durustawayh (Abū Muḥammad ʿAbdallāh, 258/871-346/957):

In his *Commentary on 'The Eloquent Man'*, in which the different ideas behind the expression 'he found' are discussed, Ibn Durustawayh said:

'This expression ('he found') is one of the strongest proofs adduced by those who claim that the Bedouin Arab language contains homonyms. Sībawayh discussed homonymy at the start of his *al-Kitāb* and made it one of his initial principles.

Those who fail to contemplate the level of ideas, and fail to investigate the actual connections between expressions and ideas, suppose that it is a single expression that has come to have multiple different ideas behind it. However, the ideas behind this expression are in fact all the same: the idea of attaining something whether for good or bad'. [657]

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[656] This dynamic has been noted and analysed by more than one scholar. See, for example: Wolfhart Heinrichs, "The Classification of the Sciences and the Consolidation of Philology in Classical Islam," in *Centres of Learning: Learning and Location in Pre-Modern Europe and the Near East*, ed. Jan Willem Drijvers and A A MacDonald (Leiden / New York: Brill, 1995).

[657] Ibn Durustawayh's commentary (*Šarḥ al-Faṣīḥ*) on *The Eloquent Man* (*al-Faṣīḥ*) by Ṯaʿlab is lost, and this

Ibn Durustawayh is engaged in a polemical modification of the concept of homonymy. He

chooses the same example (the word *wağada*, "he found") that Sībawayh used to explain

homonymy at the start of *al-Kitāb*,[658] and uses it to argue that this is not a matter of a single

expression denoting multiple ideas but rather of an expression denoting a single idea that can

itself be used in different ways. This contradicts the more usual understanding of the polysemous

lexicon as being one in which the multiple and independent ideas behind expressions are

enumerated. Enantiosemy (*aḍdād*), in which these multiple ideas actually contradict each other,

is therefore the most extreme type of homonymy. If Ibn Durustawayh denied homonymy he must

have also denied enantiosemy, and we know from his reference to a work of his (now lost) titled

On the Invalidity of Enantiosemy that this was indeed the case.[659]

The question of whether *aḍdād* did indeed exist in Arabic was a live issue among the tenth-

century theorists. Ibn al-Anbārī (Muḥammad b. al-Qāsim, d. 328/940) wrote in the introduction

to his *Kitāb al-Aḍdād* that expressions with two opposite meanings were a characteristic of

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quotation is preserved in as-Suyūṭī, *al-Muzhir*, 1:384. Cf. Kanazi, *Studies*, 204-205 (note 5); as-Suyūṭī, *Buġyat al-Wuʿāh*, 2:36. We learn from as-Suyūṭī's *Buġyah* that Ibn Durustawayh was thought to have been a companion of al-Mubarrad (for whom see note 364) and to have met Ibn Qutaybah. The text translated above reads:

> *qāla –bnu Durustawayhi fī-Šarḥi –l-Faṣīḥi wa-qad ḏukira lafẓatu wağada wa-ḫtilāfi maʿānīhā hāḏihī –l-lafẓatu min aqwā ḥuğaği man yazʿamu anna min kalāmi –l-ʿarabi mā yattafiqu lafẓuhū wa-yaḫtalifu maʿnāhu li-anna Sībawayhi ḏakarahū fī awwali kitābihī wa-ğaʿalahū min –l-uṣūli –l-mutaqaddamati fa-ẓanna man lam yataʾmmal –l-maʿānī wa-lam yataḥaqqaq –l-ḥaqāʾiqa anna hāḏā lafẓun wāḥidun qad ğāʾa li-maʿānin muḫtalifatin wa-innamā hāḏihī –l-maʿānī kulluhā šayʾun wāḥidun wa-huwa iṣābatu –š-šayʾi ḫayran kāna aw šarran.*

Ibn Durustawayh goes on to explain that lexicographers have been confused by the variant verbal nouns (*maṣādir*) that exist for a particular root (*w-ğ-d* has at least seven: *wağd*, *ğidah*, *wuğd*, *wuğūd*, *wiğdān*, *iğdān*, and *mawğidah*), have incorrectly associated them with different objects of the verb in reality, and have failed to comprehend the complex subtleties of their morphological derivations. Sure enough, this is exactly what Sībawayh's teacher and the first extant lexicographer, al-Ḫalīl b. Aḥmad al-Farāhīdī (d. 175/791), did in his *Kitāb al-ʿAyn*: *wağd* is connected to sorrow, *mawğidah* is connected to anger, and *wiğdān* and *ğidah* are connected to attaining something. Ibn Aḥmad al-Farāhīdī al-Ḫalīl, *Kitāb al-ʿAyn*, ed. Mahdī Maḫzūmī and Ibrāhīm Sāmarrāʾī, 8 in 4 vols. (Baghdad: Wizārat aṯ-Ṯaqāfah wa-l-Iʿlām, 1980). 6:169; as-Suyūṭī, *al-Muzhir*, 1:384. Cf. Ragib, for whom *w-ğ-d* is an opportunity to draw another dividing line between a word's application to God and its application to humans: Ragib, *Quranic Glossary*, 854.

[658] See page 207.

[659] *…fī-kitābinā fī ibṭāli –l-aḍdād*. as-Suyūṭī, *al-Muzhir*, 1:396.

Arabic as spoken by the Bedouin Arabs, that they were a subset of homonymy,[660] and that their linguistic context (the other words surrounding them) would always enable the correct meaning to be understood.[661] He also refers to unnamed "others" who maintained, as did Ibn Durustawayh, that words referring to two contradictory ideas should in fact be understood as referring to a single principle idea within the semantic breadth of which the two different variants could then interact with each other.[662]

The best known exponent of this theory, that the multifarious meanings of almost every root in Arabic can be traced back to a single principle, is Ibn Fāris (Abū al-Ḥusayn Aḥmad, d. 395/1004). His dictionary, *Muʿǧam Maqāyīs al-Luġah* (*Dictionary of the Gauges of the Lexicon*), states these principles for every single root it includes. Ibn Fāris is clearly motivated by the desire to minimize the number of principles per root, and in the great majority of cases does indeed confine each root's range of meanings to a single principle. In the case of the root *w-ǧ-d* dealt with by Sībawayh and Ibn Durustawayh, he writes that these three letters in this order "indicate a single principle – finding something".[663]

Ibn al-Anbārī also commented on the controversy over whether synonyms really existed in Arabic, or whether in fact each apparent synonym actually had a subtley different meaning. He quotes Quṭrub as saying that the Bedouin Arabs' use of synonyms was a rhetorical flourish designed to show the semantic breadth of their language. Some fifty years later, Ragib's

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[660] *wa-maǧrā ḥurūfi –l-aḍdādi maǧrā –l-ḥurūfi –llatī taqaʿu ʿalā –l-maʿānī –l-muḫtalifati wa-in lam yakun mutaḍāddah*. Ibn al-Anbārī, *Kitāb al-Aḍdād*, 3-4.

[661] Ibid., 1-4.

[662] *wa-qāla āḫirūna iḏā waqaʿa –l-ḥurūfu ʿalā maʿnīyayni mutaḍāddayni fa-l-aṣlu li-maʿnan wāḥidin ṯumma tadāḫala –l-iṯnāni ʿalā ǧihati –l-ittisāʿ*. Ibid., 8.

[663] *al-wāw wa-l-ǧīm wa-d-dāl yadillu ʿalā aṣlin wāḥidin wa-huwa –š-šayʾu yulfīhi*. Ibn Fāris, *Muʿǧam Maqāyīs al-Luġah*, 6:86.

contemporary Abū Hilāl al-ʿAskarī (al-Ḥasan b. ʿAbdallāh, d. ca. 1010) would write a book explicitly designed to show the subtle inflections in meaning that enabled him to deny the existence of any synonyms.[664]

In all these lexical discussions, there was also often a latent political angle: what was the status of the intellectual inheritance from the desert Bedouin Arabs? Were they to be praised for their poetry and facility with language, or condescended to for a damaging inexactness in expression? Ibn al-Anbārī is clear: the Bedouin Arabs manipulated context so skillfully that the multi-faceted words they used never in fact resulted in ambiguity.[665]

In the quotation above, Ibn Durustawayh complained about the failure of scholars to "contemplate the level of ideas".[666] This concept, in which the pairing of expression and idea is used to make a distinction between two different strategies for thinking, is something that we have already seen in Ragib.[667] For Ragib, thinking of language as composed of both expressions and ideas was useful in exegesis and theology because one can then choose to either follow God's ideas or God's expressions while remaining faithful at all times to God's language. For Ibn Durustawayh it was useful in lexicography. For the major theorist Ibn Ǧinnī (Abū al-Fatḥ ʿUtmān, d. 392/1002) it enabled him to distinguish the different ways in which Sībawayh had constructed his grammatical theory. The pairing of expression and idea performs the same

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[664] al-Ḥasan b. ʿAbdallāh Abū Hilāl al-ʿAskarī, *al-Furūq al-Luġawīyah* (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmīyah, 2006).

[665] Ibn al-Anbārī, *Kitāb al-Aḍdād*, 1-2. This cultural and political argument over the status of the new civilization's Bedouin Arab heritage vis-à-vis its contacts with more established Persianate cultures was widespread in the eighth and ninth centuries. It is usually referred to as the *Šuʿūbīyah* controversy. See: C. E. Bosworth, "Shuʿūbiyya," in *Encyclopedia of Arabic literature*, ed. Julie Scott Meisami and Paul Starkey (London / New York: Routledge, 1998).

[666] *man lam yata'mmal –l-maʿānī*. See page 221.

[667] See the section "Metaphorical Readings" on page 191.

function in lexicography, theology, exegesis, and grammar; it facilitates the distinction between form and content.

Language, for Ibn Ǧinnī, was "every expression that is self-sufficient in its communication of the idea behind it".[668] He explained that the chapter on homonyms in his *al-Ḫaṣāʾiṣ* (*The Properties [of Arabic]*) does not deal with divergent ideas behind single expressions in the way that discussions about, for example, the different ways that *waǧada* can be used "appear a great deal in the books of the lexicographers".[669] Instead, he was dealing with "the level behind that .. [which is] formulated in the souls of the words".[670] This referred to the grammatical idea or function behind each morphological component (the vowels and letters) of a word.

Ibn Ǧinnī made the following statement about the way Sībawayh thought in a particular case: "explanation according to the idea, not according to the expression".[671] According to Ibn Ǧinnī, Sībawayh was not looking at morphological rules and patterns when he put forward the proposal in question but rather at the mental associations made by language users. Sībawayh had explained that the *kasrah* ("i") vowel at the end of the word *faǧāri* (a proper name: "Vice") was

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[668] *ammā –l-kalāmu fa-kullu lafẓin mustaqillin bi-nafsihī mufīdin li-maʿnāhu*. Ibn Ǧinnī, *al-Ḫaṣāʾiṣ*, 1:17. He was talking about language, or more exactly about meaningful speech: that which made sense on its own; a sentence or clause.

[669] *ġaraḍunā min hāḏā –l-bābi laysa mā ǧāʾa bihī –n-nāsu fī kutubihim naḥwu waǧadtu fī-l-ḥuzni wa-waǧādtu fī-l-ġaḍabi … fa-inna hāḏā -ḍ-ḍarbu min –l-kalāmi … kaṯīrun fī kutub –l-ʿulamāʾi*. Ibid., 2:93.

[670] *wa-innamā ġaraḍunā hunā mā warāʾuhū … al-maṣūġatu fī anfusi –l-kalim*. Ibid.

[671] *tafsīrun ʿalā ṭarīqi –l-maʿnā lā ʿalā ṭarīqi –l-lafẓ*. Ibid., 2:198-199. Ibn Ǧinnī was not the first to make this sort of judgement in the field of grammar. Ibn as-Sarrāǧ (Muḥammad b. Sahl, d. 316/928) made the same statement about Quran 7:59 and 11:50 (Hūd): *mā lakum min ilāhin ġayruhū* (or *ġayrihī* in the variant readings of Abū Jaʿfar Yazīd b. al-Qaʿqāʿ (d. 130/747) and ʿAlī b. Ḥamza al-Kisāʾī (d. 189/804)). Ibn as-Sarrāǧ wrote that the reading *ġayruhū* was according to the *maʿnā* and the reading *ġayrihī* was according to the *lafẓ*. Versteegh notes that "*maʿnā* is identical with the underlying level" and that this usage may well follow the use of *maʿnā* to paraphrase or reconstruct the intention of a Quranic verse. This example was also used by Frank. Frank, "Meanings " 312; Muḥammad b. Sahl Ibn as-Sarrāǧ, *al-Uṣūl fī-n-Naḥw*, ed. ʿAbd al-Ḥusayn al-Fatlī, 4 vols. (Beirut: Muʾassasat ar-Risālah, 1996). 1:94; Royal Aal al-Bayt Institute for Islamic Thought, "Altafsir.com," http://www.altafsir.com/Recitations.asp; Versteegh, "The Arabic Tradition," 245.

the result of the Bedouin Arabs' association of what is actually a noun with the ending of a hypothetical verb in the feminine.[672]

Ibn Ǧinnī also engaged in a more exact description of the level of ideas. He made a distinction between two types of functions that occur behind expressions, one of which was strictly grammatical, and the other of which he identified as idea (*maʿnā*). He distinguished between the level of grammatical reconstruction and supplementation needed to explain the declension of an expression (*taqdīr al-iʿrāb*) and the level of reconstruction that explains the idea, context, and intent behind an expression (*tafsīr al-maʿnā*). In the former, the elided word that is re-supplied fits into the case structure of the sentence, whereas in the latter, the reconstruction does not reproduce the case structure that motivated it in the first place. The exegesis of the idea behind an expression is a mental reconstruction, whereas simple grammatical reconstruction reconfigures the text (and its expressions).[673]

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[672] In the chapter in question (*bāb mā ǧāʾa maʿdūlan ʿan ḥaddihī min –l-muʾannaṯ*) Sībawayh is describing how masculine proper names (diptotes that do not fully decline) can be derived, against their own grammatical principles (*maʿdūlun ʿan waǧhihī wa-aṣlihī*), as feminine on the pattern *faʿāli*. In some cases, the final *kasrah* comes from the *yāʾ* found on the feminine singular imperative (*ifʿalī*) and in other cases Sībawayh argues that it should be traced back to the feminine gender of the verbal noun. The example that Ibn Ǧinnī picks up on, *faǧāri*, is according to Sībawayh derived from the feminine verbal noun *al-faǧrah*. The proof texts are, of course, poetry. Sībawayh, *Kitāb*, 3:270-274, 274 (2:36-38, 38).

[673] An example of *taqdīr al-iʿrāb* is the phrase *ahlaka wa-l-layla* ("your people and the night!"), the grammatical reconstruction of which is *ilḥak ahlaka wa-sābiq –l-layla* ("find your people and outstrip the night! i.e. get to them before nightfall"). The addition of the two transitive verbs both explains and fits the accusative case in which the two objects in the original sentence were placed. Ibn Ǧinnī, *al-Ḫaṣāʾiṣ*, 1:279. An example of *tafsīr al-maʿnā* is the phrase *ḍarabtu zaydan sawṭan* (*"I struck Zayd a stick!") the idea behind which is *ḍarabtuhū ḍarbatan bi-sawṭin* ("I struck him a blow with a stick"). This idea makes sense, but according to Ibn Ǧinnī it does not represent an accurate *taqdīr al-iʿrāb*, which would be *ḍarabtuhū ḍarbata sawṭin* (*"I struck him a blow of stick") because the *taqdīr al-iʿrāb* reconstruction strategy requires in this case that the word which governs the case in *sawṭan* must be the word that had been elided and is to be supplied (*ḥaḏf al-muḍāf* as opposed to *ḥaḏf ḥarf al-ǧarr* ("elision of the preposition governing the genitive") which is less favoured). Therefore, the *taqdīr al-iʿrāb* of *ḍarabtu zaydan sawṭan* is *ḍarabtuhū ḍarbata sawṭin* but the more meaningful *tafsīr al-maʿnā* of the same phrase is *ḍarabtuhū ḍarbatan bi-sawṭin*. Ibid., 1:284. Cf. al-Ǧurǧānī's *maʿānī an-naḥw*: Larkin, *The Theology of Meaning*, 54. Al-Ǧurǧānī also discusses this exact example in his *Asrār*, concluding that the grammarians' reconstruction is "the original [level of] language that may be forgotten and copied over (…*mā kāna ʿalayhi –l-kalāmu fī aṣlihī wa-anna ḏālika qad nusiya wa-nusiḫa*)". al-Ǧurǧānī, *Asrār al-Balāġah*, 330.

This is important evidence of critical thinking about the pairing of expression and idea, and about the different functions that the idea had come to discharge both in grammar, and in broader accounts of language. It is a distinction that also appears in the work of Ibn Ǧinnī's predecessor az-Zaǧǧāǧī (Abū al-Qāsim ʿAbd ar-Raḥmān, d. ca. 337/948), albeit with less terminological precision. Az-Zaǧǧāǧī wrote that Sībawayh's use of expressions and ideas to analyse polysemy at the start of al-Kitāb should be read as a referring to both the ideas behind expressions of case inflection and the ideas behind expressions of whole words.[674] Ibn Ǧinnī would then say that the first type of ideas were accessed by *taqdīr al-iʿrāb*, and the second type by *tafsīr al-maʿnā*.

Finally, in a division that parallels the one Ragib would later make between language that indicates things with proper nouns and language that indicates ideas through polysemy,[675] Ibn Ǧinnī writes:

> If you were to ask why proper names seldom refer to ideas and more often refer to external physical things such as Zayd, Ǧaʿfar, and all individuals that have a name, then the answer would be that external physical things are more easily sensed and more clearly witnessed. They are more amenable to naming than that which can neither be seen nor sensed, but rather must be contemplated and deduced without the knowledge that inevitably comes from direct witness.[676]

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[674] Therefore, just as "he went" and "he sat" are two different expressions with two different ideas behind them, the visible difference in the case of "your brother" in *akramanī aḫūka* ("your brother honoured me") and *akramtu aḫāka* ("I honoured your brother") constitutes two different expressions with two different ideas behind them. Abū al-Qāsim az-Zaǧǧāǧī, *al-Īḍāḥ fī ʿIlal an-Naḥw*, ed. Māzin al-Mubārak (Cairo: Dār al-ʿArūbah, 1959). 137-138.

[675] See page 166.

[676] The text reads:
> *fa-in qulta wa-li-ma qallat –l-iʿlāmu fī-l-maʿānī wa-kaṯurat fī-l-aʿyāni naḥwu Zaydin wa-Ǧaʿfara wa-ǧamīʿu mā ʿallaqa ʿalayhi ʿalamun wa-huwa šaḫsun qīla li-anna –l-aʿyāna aẓharu li-l-ḥāssati wa-abdā ilā –l-mušāhadati fa-kānat ašbaha bi-l-ʿalamīyati mimmā lā yurā wa-lā yušahadu ḥissan wa-innamā yuʿlamu taʾammulan wa-stidlālan wa-laysat ka-maʿlūmi -ḍ-ḍurūrati li-l-mušāhadah.*

Ibn Ǧinnī, *al-Ḥaṣāʾiṣ*, 2:200.

Ibn Ǧinnī now appears to us both as a member of the generation of theorists that took a basic theory of meaning, and assumptions about the management of linguistic ambiguity, to a whole new level of sophistication, and as someone whose ideas about language may have been influential on Ragib. As we have seen in the preceding chapters, Ragib translated the grammatical theory of scholars like Ibn Ǧinnī into a philosophy of language and a theory of meaning that could work across the genres of exegesis, theology, and poetics.

There is neither time nor space here for us to review the vast swathe of theories and disputes about language that took place among Ragib's predecessors and contemporaries in the tenth and eleventh centuries. The major figures dealt with above provide sufficient evidence that the turn towards theory had taken place, and that the pairing of expression and idea was at the centre of all the discussions of language in the Arabic Language Tradition. It was accompanied by the iterative process of negotiating linguistic ambiguity. To conclude this section I will now refer in brief to three scholars who had particularly notable theories in poetics and legal theory, and one man who came after Ragib but cast such a great shadow that he cannot be ommitted from any historical review of the philosophy of language in Arabic.

In the tenth and eleventh-centuries legal theory was developing into an independent discipline, one that would achieve its full potential in the madrasa from the twelfth century onwards. In the two hundred years after aš-Šāfiʿī's death, however, legal theory had both a distinct identity and a particular approach to language. Ragib's slightly younger contemporary, the Muʿtazilī Abū al-Ḥusayn al-Baṣrī (Muḥammad b. ʿAlī, d. 436/1044), clarified this self-conscious identity. He argued that legal theory needed to be separated from extraneous detailed

discourses about the nature and classification of knowledge,[677] and stated that the subject matter

of legal theory was divinely revealed judgements (*aḥkām šarʿīyah*).

Legal theory was therefore the process of establishing the hermeneutical principles that

would enable jurists to read divine revelation and determine its judgements. The theories of

language that it contained did not speak to any concerns broader than the extraction of actionable

legal information from text and speech. However, even that limited goal did catalyse sustained

theorizing on language, and we can see this in the work of the tenth-century legal theorist al-

Ǧaṣṣāṣ. Every hermeneutical device and division is described in terms of the relationship

between expression and idea, from general versus specific reference (*ʿāmm* and *ḫāṣṣ*), to the

literal and non-literal (*ḥaqīqah* and *maǧāz*),[678] and of course polysemy. An expression can

encompass two ideas, one of which is literal and the other non-literal, or one of which is

unequivocal (*ṣarīḥ*) and the other allusive (*kināyah*).[679]

Intent was critical in determining what the speaker meant. Al-Ǧaṣṣāṣ reports his teacher,

Abū al-Ḥasan al-Karḫī (ʿUbaydallāh b. al-Ḥusayn, d. 340/952), as proving a point by saying:

"when he *intended* one of the two meanings of a homonym then it was *as if* he had spoken

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[677] Abū al-Ḥusayn al-Baṣrī had written a commentary on al-Qāḍī ʿAbd al-Ǧabbār's *Kitāb al-ʿUmad* (*Book of the Core Issues*), and while writing this commentary he had felt that it included subjects that were not strictly concerned with legal theory (*lā talīqu bi-uṣūli -l-fiqhi min daqīqi -l-kalāmi naḥwi –l-qawli fī aqsāmi -l-ʿulūmi wa-ḥaddi -ḍ-ḍarūrīyi minhā wa-l-muktasab...*). He therefore made sure to exclude these matters from his influential *Kitāb al-Muʿtamad fī Uṣūl al-Fiqh* (*That Which Can Be Relied Upon in Legal Theory*). Abū al-Ḥusayn al-Baṣrī, *Kitāb al-Muʿtamad fī Uṣūl al-Fiqh*, ed. Aḥmad Bakīr and Ḥasan Ḥanafī, 2 vols. (Damascus: Institut Francais de Damas, 1965). 1:7-8; Vishanoff, *Islamic Hermeneutics*, 252 (note 439). For the distinction between theological and legal theories, see also: M. A. S. Abdel Haleem and Abū Bakr Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan Ibn Fūrak, "Early Islamic Theological and Juristic Terminology: "Kitāb al-Ḥudūd fi 'l-uṣūl," by Ibn Fūrak," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 54, no. 1 (1991): 15.

[678] Abū al-Ḥusayn al-Baṣrī, for whom *ḥaqīqah* and *maǧāz* were necessary and inevitable aspects of language, saw homonymy as primarily a matter of an expression being connected to one idea literally, and to another idea non-literally. Abū al-Ḥusayn al-Baṣrī, *al-Muʿtamad*, 1:22-23. For a review of al-Ǧaṣṣāṣ' understanding of *maǧāz*, see: Heinrichs, "Contacts," 258f. And on al-Ǧaṣṣāṣ' legal scholarship more broadly: Vishanoff, *Islamic Hermeneutics*, 219-220 (and index).

[679] al-Ǧaṣṣāṣ, *Uṣūl al-Fiqh*, 1:46, 1:48.

unequivocally and named it exactly, and therefore not included the other meaning [in his speech]".[680] Al-Karḫī needed to give a linguistically ambiguous speech act the status of an unambiguous one, and so he used the speaker's posited intent to read ambiguity as clarity.

In all these cases what matters is the judgement, the legal value (*al-ḥukm*). It dominates al-Ġaṣṣāṣ' thinking to the extent that his eighty-ninth chapter reproduces the traditional explanation of the structure of homonymy and synonymy, but the expressions in this new structure are replaced by the judgements (*aḥkām*).[681] This tells us both that the judgement is what is primarily at stake, and that al-Ġaṣṣāṣ has internalised the use of the pairing of expression and idea to conceive of polysemy to such an extent that he reproduces it for a different purpose. This kind of taxonomical theorizing is typical of the work produced after the twelfth century in the madrasa, and the fact that it can be found in tenth-century legal theory shows how much influence the discipline of legal theory had on the later development of intellectual endeavour.

Linguistic ambiguity is therefore a fact of Arabic, but one that has to be conquered in order to derive the law, whether from a divine revelation in Arabic, or for a community that speaks in Arabic. These hermeneutical principles, which in the work of al-Ġaṣṣāṣ go hand in hand with confidence in the scholar's ability to determine the intent behind linguistic ambiguity, are the

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[680] *wa-yaḥtaǧǧu fīhi bi-annahū matā arāda aḥada –l-maʿānīyayni fa-ka-annahū qad ṣaraḥa bihī wa-sammāhu bi-ʿaynihī fa-lā yatanāwalu –l-maʿnā –l-āḫar.* Ibid., 1:77.

[681] The chapter title is: "on the judgements being different while the idea is the same, and the judgements being the same while the ideas are different" (*fī –ḫtilāfi –l-aḥkāmi maʿa –ttifāqi –l-maʿnā wa-ttifāqihā maʿa –ḫtilāfi –l-maʿānī*). The actual argument that al-Ġaṣṣāṣ made in this chapter was relatively simple. A single idea can produce rulings on a number of different subject. For example, the idea or hermeneutical concept of sexual intercourse produces a ruling requiring expiatory extra fasting if sex occurs during the Ramadan fast, as well as a ruling requiring sacrifice of an animal as atonement if sex occurs while the person is in a state of ritual purity for pilgrimage (*yaǧūzu an yataʿallaqa bi-l-maʿnā –l-wāḥidi aḥkāmun muḫtalifatun ka-taʿalluqi īǧābi kaffārati ramaḍāna wa-dammi –l-iḥrāmi bi-l-ǧimāʿ*). Al-Ġaṣṣāṣ then says that this *maʿnā-aḥkām* dynamic is the same as the dynamic when a single name (*ism*) is a sign (*ʿalam*) for different rulings. Conversely, a single ruling can be derived from different ideas, or on the basis of different rationales (*wa-ǧāʾizun ayḍan –ttifāqu –l-aḥkāmi li-ʿilalin muḫtalifah*). Ibid., 4:175-176.

same in legal theory and in exegesis.[682] It is only when literature is involved that theories of meaning come to address the creation of language as well as its interpretation.

That was the case with Ragib, and it was also the case with Qudāmah, with whose work Ragib was, as we have already seen, familiar. Qudāmah, like Ragib, structured his poetics according to the dynamics of the connections made between expressions and ideas.[683] Poetics was the genre in which fully fledged theories of meaning that were more than just hermeneutics could emerge. After Qudāmah, and Ragib, it is therefore unsurprising that the scholar who would come to dominate the analysis of language from the eleventh centry onwards worked in both the hermeneutical discipline of Quranic exegesis, and in poetics. Al-Ǧurǧānī, dying as he did in 471/1078, falls outside the chronological scope of this dissertation, which does not consider those who could not have been Ragib's predecessors or contemporaries.

Nevertheless, al-Ǧurǧānī's impact was so substantial that it behoves us to use him, and Ragib, to conclude this historical review of the Arabic Language Tradition. We should also note the form in which he wrote: his two books on language, *Asrār al-Balāġah* and *Dalāʾil al-Iʿǧāz*, are substantial monographs on literary eloquence and Quranic inimitability respectively. This self-conscious foregrounding of language results in clear statements about his intellectual endeavour that tally with what we have already seen in more scattered remarks across a variety of genres in this and the preceding chapters. Al-Ǧurǧānī writes in the introduction to his *Dalāʾil* that the best discipline of knowledge in any language is the study of clear communication (*ʿilm*

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[682] Schwarb discusses the relationship between exegesis, legal theory, and poetics with similar conclusions at: Schwarb, "Capturing the Meanings," 133f.

[683] See page 185. Ragib may also have been aware of another notable work of tenth-century language theory that showed some Aristotelian influence, that of Ibn Wahb, for which see notes 285 and 426, and Geert Jan Van Gelder, "Ibn Wahb," in *Encyclopedia of Arabic literature*, ed. Julie Scott Meisami and Paul Starkey (London / New York: Routledge, 1998).

al-bayān), that knowledge of language is a subtle and reasoned process at the summit of which is

Quranic inimitability, and that poetry is the source and the essence of that profound and elusive

process.[684]

The theoretical advance of al-Ǧurǧānī's that is most important for the discussions in this

dissertation is his decision to subdivide the level of ideas. Ragib's analysis of how complex

metaphors functioned had gone some way in this direction, but al-Ǧurǧānī made the theoretical

distinction between an initial idea (*maʿnā*) and a subsequent idea about that idea (*maʿnā al-*

maʿnā). Ragib understood complex metaphors with two models that went beyond the simple

concept of an attribute borrowed from a source and given to a target. In the rhetorical figure of

allusive borrowing (*istiʿārat al-kināyah*) he broadened the understanding of the source to include

ongoing actions and states as well as attributes. When "the reins of the morning were in the hand

of the northwind", the northwind (target) is compared to a leader engaged in the act of leading

(source), with the clouds as the sheep that he is leading.[685]

Ragib's other theory of complex metaphor includes the combined comparison (*tašbīh*

muǧmal), in which "the target and the source are mentioned, but the aspect that they share is not

clarified, in which case the compared idea is reasoned either intuitively or deductively [by the

[684] ʿAbd al-Qāhir b. ʿAbd ar-Raḥmān al-Ǧurǧānī, *Dalāʾil al-Iʿǧāz* (Damascus: Maktabat Saʿd ad-Dīn, 1983; repr.,
1987). 59-61; ———, *Dalāʾil ed. Šinqīṭī*, 4-6; ———, *Dalāʾil al-Iʿǧāz*, ed. Maḥmūd Muḥammad Šākir (Cairo: Dār
al-Madanī, 1992; repr., 1987). 5-7.

[685] *iḏ aṣbaḥat bi-yadi –šamāli zimāmuhā qaṣada ilā tašbīha –š-šamāli bi-qāʾyidin* [sic.] *wa-s-saḥāba bi-baʿīrin*
maqūd. Ragib therefore does "justice to the underlying *tamthīl* [analogy]", answering Heinrich's complaint that the
notion of *istiʿārah* in other theorists' work usually fails to do so (they read this line as the borrowing of the hand for
the northwind, and the borrowing of the rein for the morning). The poet is Labīd (Abū ʿAqīl b. Rabīʿah, d. ca.
40/660). Heinrichs, *The Hand of the Northwind*, 9; al-Huḏayliyīn and Ḫuwaylid b. Ḫālid Abū Duʾayb, *Dīwān al-*
Huḏayliyīn, ed. Aḥmad az-Zayn and Maḥmūd Abū al-Wafā, 3 in 1 vols. (Cairo: Dār al-Kutub al-Miṣrīyah, 1945-
1950). 1:3; Key, "Language and Literature," 58; Ragib. *Innovative Figures of Speech*. f.12b.

audience]".[686] The dynamic in this single rhetorical figure heralds one of al-Ǧurǧānī's theoretical statements about language as a whole:

> Language is divided into two types. In one, you grasp the intended aim with the indication of the expression alone (*bi-dalālati –l-lafẓ waḥdahū*), for example if you intended to inform [someone] about Zayd's literal departure, you would say 'Zayd left'. In the other type of language you do not grasp the intended aim with the indication of the expression alone, but rather the expression indicates its idea, the lexical context of which it necessitates, to you, and then you find that this idea contains a second indication that leads you to the intended aim. This type of language relies on allusion, *istiʿārah*, and analogy.[687]

As in Ragib, the theory of meaning is twofold. Language is either simple indication, or complex reference. For al-Ǧurǧānī, complex reference is defined not by the polysemic situation in which it occurs, but by the second level of mental effort on the part of the audience that goes into deciphering it. He is aware that this is an explicit theoretical claim, and he creates a new terminology for it:

> If you have understood all of the above, then here is an abbreviated way to express it. You can just say 'the idea' and 'the idea of the idea'. By 'the idea' you will mean the idea directly understood from the expression itself (*ẓāhir al-lafẓ*) without an intermediary. By 'the idea of the idea' you will mean that you reason an idea from the expression and then that idea leads you to another idea…[688]

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[686] *wa-l-muǧmalu an yuḏkara –l-mušabbahu wa-l-mušabbahu bihī wa-lam yubayyan –l-waǧhu –llaḏī tašābahā wa-ḏālika iḏ kāna maʿnā –t-tašbīhi maʿqūlan immā bi-badīhati –l-ʿaqli aw bi-baʿḍi –l-istidlālāt.* His example is taken from the *Muʿallaqah* of Zuhayr (b. Ǧanāb, fl. sixth century):
> they rose early and set out at dawn, for they and the valley of ar-Rass were like the hand to the mouth (*bakarna bukūran wa-staḥarna bi-suḥratin / fa-hunna wa-wādī –r-rassi ka-l-yadi li-l-fami*)

Ahlwardt, *Divans*, 94; Ragib. *Innovative Figures of Speech*. f.8a.

[687] al-Ǧurǧānī, *Dalā'il ed. Šinqīṭī*, 202; ———, *Dalā'il ed. Šākir*, 262. Also translated and edited by: Larkin, *The Theology of Meaning*, 74, 184-185.

[688] al-Ǧurǧānī, *Dalā'il ed. Šinqīṭī*, 203; ———, *Dalā'il ed. Šākir*, 263. Also translated by: Abu Deeb, *Al-Jurjānī's Theory*, 75f. Cf. (mis-referenced to the *Asrār*): ʿAbbās, *Tārīḫ an-Naqd*, 429.

Like Ragib, al-Ǧurǧānī was concerned with the theological status of words as well as their poetic value. He could therefore put his theory to use in the sort of exegetical problems with which Ragib had dealt.[689]

Concluding Remarks on the Arabic Language Tradition

The notion that the interaction between language and mind could be divided into two core concepts that referred to the form of words and their content was by no means unique to Arabic. Scholars writing and talking in Arabic settled on the pairing of expression and idea very early on, as those of other times and places had and would settle on their own names for this binary. However, the theory of meaning that developed in the Arabic-speaking intellectual world of the seventh to eleventh centuries was remarkable in its resilience, widespread usage, and not coincidentally, its interpretative power and the autonomy it gave to scholars to make their own decisions about what language had meant and should mean. In the Arabic Language Tradition, as we have been reading in this chapter, the theory of meaning based on expressions and ideas was paired with an assumption that linguistic ambiguity was ubiquitous, surmountable, and could be emancipatory.

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[689] Al-Ǧurǧānī denied that the word "hand" can simply be conceived of as lexically equivalent to the word "blessing", and attempted to demonstrate that the two words are not interchangeable. For example, they are not interchangeable in translation into other languages (al-Ǧurǧānī, *Asrār al-Balāġah*, 327; Larkin, *The Theology of Meaning*, 89f.). Ragib had espoused just that equivalence in his *Exegesis*, and qualified the relationship between the two words as one of *istiʿārah* in his *Quranic Glossary* ("'Hand' was borrowed [and given to] 'blessing'". Ragib, *Quranic Glossary*. See discussions and translations above at notes 276, 463, 579, and 580). Al-Ǧurǧānī's solution was more complex. The semantic connection between "hand" and "blessing" is weaker, when reasoned with examples, than the semantic connection between "hand" and "ability (*qudrah*)". "Ability" is therefore a more acceptable exegetical response to the word "hand" in the Quran. The relationship between "hand" and "ability" is an "allusion by way of analogy" (*talwīḥ bi-l-maṯal*), and this is appropriate for an attribute of God. In fact, al-Ǧurǧānī concludes, the hermeneutical equivalence between "hand" and "blessing" or "power" was originally motivated by a laudable theological belief in the impossibility of anthropomorphism combined with an insufficient theory of meaning (al-Ǧurǧānī, *Asrār al-Balāġah*, 332; Larkin, *The Theology of Meaning*, 90-91. Al-Ǧurǧānī references al-Mubarrad as an early adopter of such exegetical equivalences. Al-Mubarrad had equated God's right hand (*yamīn*) in Quran 39:67 (az-Zumar) with "power". Ragib had agreed that the relationship between "right hand" should be read according to the hermeneutic for "hand". al-Mubarrad, *al-Kāmil*, 1:75; Ragib, *Quranic Glossary*, 893.).

The story began in the first cultural capitals of Islamic intellectual society, Kufa and Basra. There, scholars started to standardize terminology that would enable them both to argue about what to call each other, and to negotiate the revelation that Islam had brought from the other side of the Arabian desert. Two key principles were established: language was potentially ambiguous, and a popular solution was homonymy. The most systematic theory was done in grammar, which is also where we find the first presentation of polysemy explained with the pairing of expression and idea.

The work of the next generations of scholars laid down theories that could stand alongside Sībawayh's magnum opus in grammar. By now, the pairing of expression and idea was terminologically established, and another key assumption had started to become apparent and self-conscious. In the Arabic language that had always been understood as linguistically ambiguous, the main site of that ambiguity, and the source that scholars could always refer back to for precedents, was poetry. The Bedouin Arabs had been poets, and the intellectual culture that was now over two centuries old was becoming a culture of literary critics.

Later, as we get closer to Ragib's contemporaries, the central issues of linguistic ambiguity and polysemy had begun to be debated, and deconstructed. Scholars were arguing, and writing, about the way that polysemy occured in Arabic, and the best way to describe it. They were also engaged in criticism of the theories of their predecessors. The level of sophistication and abstraction in the work of intellectuals such as Ibn Ǧinnī matches anything that theorists of language are producing in the twenty-first century in European languages. As theorists became more numerous, the particular strand of thought that was legal theory came to develop its own account of language, which lay at the heart of the jurisprudential hermeneutic being developing. The analysis of polysemy was a central concern of a genre that sought to extract firm rules from

the linguistically ambiguous corpus of revelation, and to impose these rules on the equally ambiguous world of human speech.

The legal theorists tended to neglect poetry and poetics, or at least to relegate them to the role of a stale resource of linguistic precedent, a treasure trove of past usage that could be mined but not expanded. However, other scholars were working in that very discipline, and were taking insights about language developed in exegesis, grammar, and indeed legal theory itself and developing them into new theories about eloquence and rhetorical innovation. It is therefore not suprising that the most complete accounts of language, where the theory of meaning based on expression and idea, and the negotiations of linguistic ambiguity, are most fully developed, are those that come from scholars who worked in both hermeneutical and poetic disciplines. Ragib, whose theory has in previous chapters been extracted from across the range of genres in which he worked, was one such scholar.

6. A CONCLUDING COMPARISON TO A CLASSICAL LANGUAGE TRADITION

In order to bring the Arabic Language Tradition discussed in the preceding chapters into focus, we need to examine it alongside the Classical Language Tradition. The difference between the two philosophical approaches to language that these two traditions embodied has not gone unnoticed in the European-language academy. In his article on metaphor, Jacques Derrida wrote that "the genius of oriental languages" is to be "lively and figurative",[690] and that metaphor has been understood by philosophy as being defined by "a provisional loss of meaning", which destroys the connections necessary for conceptual thought. According to Derrida, this destruction is what Aristotle recognised and decried as sophistry.[691]

Both Derrida and Jean-Jacques Rousseau, whom he was quoting, used this comparison to dramatize the contrast between an Orient suffused in metaphor, and the cold rational North that was Europe. It is my argument, however, that this opposition between two rival philosophical approaches to language can be profitably used to describe the situation in the Arabic-speaking mediaeval world. The Arabic Language Tradition embodied a philosophy of language in which the language itself, with its potential for ambiguity, stood front and centre. The Classical Language Tradition embodied an entirely different philosophical approach, one that believed language was a distraction, and that assumed language needed to be sidelined in order for philosophy to deal directly with both thoughts and things.

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[690] "*Et 'le génie des langues orientales' c'est d'etre 'vives et figurées'*". Jacques Derrida, "La mythologie blanche," *Poetique* 5(1971): 51; Jacques Derrida and F. C. T. Moore, "White Mythology: Metaphor in the Text of Philosophy," *New Literary History* 6, no. 1 (1974): 72. Derrida was quoting Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Essai sur l'origine des langues* (Paris: Belin, 1817; repr., Paris: A. Braik, 1983). 5. NB: *génie* is mistranslated as "genesis" in Jean-Jacques Rousseau and John H. Moran, "On the Origin of Language," in *On the Origin of Language* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1966), 11.

[691] Derrida, "La mythologie blanche," 51-52; Derrida and Moore, "White Mythology," 73-74.

The idea that language could ever be separated from mind and reality never occurred to scholars working in the Arabic Language Tradition. Could this have been the consequence of genre and discipline? Scholars like Ragib worked in poetics, literary criticism, exegesis, and literary compilation, all of which required a focus on language. The work of scholars in the Classical Language Tradition, on the other hand, often centered on the *Organon*, a collection of works with logic at its core. Perhaps only the question of the divine brought the two traditions together: the beliefs about the nature of the one and the spheres laid out in *Book Lambada* of Aristotle's *Metaphysics* and Ragib's discussions of God's unity and attributes are both conversations about the divine. However, Aristotle and the generations of Greek, Syriac, and Arabic commentators on him, did not talk about divinity in terms of language. Ragib, and the thousands of Arabic-language scholars whose assumptions he shared, could scarcely mention God without confronting the issue of the language used to describe him.

This opposition mirrors a culture clash. Mediaeval Islamicate scholars argued about whether their intellectual culture should turn to the inheritance passed down to them from the Greeks through late antiquity, or whether that heritage in fact represented an undesirable foreign influence inseperable from metaphysical claims incompatible with Islam. There was a persistent division, before the twelfth century, between Arabist scholars working in exegetical and poetic disciplines, and philhellenic scholars working on the Greek inheritance from late antiquity, and in particular, on the transmission and reception of Aristotle's *Organon*. The paradigmatic text that highlights this divide is Abū Ḥayyān at-Tawḥīdī's (d. 414/1023) report of a debate between the grammarian Abū Saʿīd as-Sīrāfī (d. 368/979) and the logician Abū Bišr Mattā (d. 328/

940).[692] This was a debate, albeit set in a court that expected Arabic to win, and reported by a

follower of the victorious participant, in which Arabic culture chose Arabic grammar as its

weapon in the defeat of a foreign Hellenistic logic that made false claims of universality. This

summary reflects Abū Ḥayyān's partisan reportage, but the text tells us how conscious tenth-

century scholars were of the culture clash.[693]

Nevertheless, scholars such as Ragib remind us that the intellectual borders of

philhellenism and anti-hellenism were porous. It was not simply the case that scholars who

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[692] D. S. Margoliouth, "The Discussion Between Abū Bishr Mattā And Abū Saʿīd al-Sīrāfī On The Merits of Logic and Grammar," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland*, no. January (1905): 79-129; Abū Ḥayyān at-Tawḥīdī, *Kitāb al-Imtāʿ wa-l-Muʾānasah*, ed. Aḥmad Amīn and Aḥmad az-Zayn, 3 in 1 vols. (Beirut: Dār Maktabat al-Ḥayāh, 1965). 1:104f. For commentary on the debate, see also: Muhsin Mahdi, "Language and Logic in Classical Islam," in *Logic in Classical Islamic Culture*, ed. Gustave E. von Grunebaum (Wiesbaden: O. Harrassowitz, 1970); Zimmermann, *Commentary and Short Treatise*, cxxiif. For later Arabic consciousness of the issue, see the Iḫwān aṣ-Ṣafāʾ's statement that anyone who wants to study philosophical logic (*al-manṭiq al-falsafī*) must first know grammar. Iḫwān aṣ-Ṣafāʾ, *Rasāʾil, Beirut*, 1:415. The idea that intellectual output was either indigenous or philhellenic, and that the standard bearers of these alternatives were grammar and logic respectively, is reflected by the Christian *falyasūf* Yaḥyā b. ʿAdī (d. 363/974), who described the difference between grammar and logic, and indeed in the division of all intellectual disciplines into either Arabic (including grammar) or foreign (including logic) in the *Mafātīḥ al-ʿUlūm* (*The Keys of the Intellectual Disciplines*) of al-Ḫuwārizmī (Abū ʿAbdallāh Muḥammad b. Aḥmad, fl. 366/976-387/997). Yaḥyā b. ʿAdī defined logic as "a craft that is concerned with expressions that refer to universals in order to combine those expressions in structures that reflect reality" (*ṣināʿatun tuʿnā bi-l-alfāẓi –d-dāllati ʿalā –l-umūri –l-kullīyati li-tuʾallifahā taʾlīfan muwāfiqan limā ʿalayhi –l-umūru –llatī hiya dāllatun ʿalayhā*). Grammar, on the other hand, was concerned with the inflection of expressions according to Bedouin Arab precedent. Al-Ḫuwārizmī wrote that he was dividing his survey of the disciplinary landscape into "the disciplines of the [Islamic] revelation and those Arabic disciplines associated with it" (*li-ʿulūmi -š-šarīʿati wa-mā yaqtarinu bihā min –l-ʿulūmi –l-ʿarabīyah*) and "the foreign disciplines from the Greeks and other nations" (*li-ʿulūmi –l- aǧami min –l-yūnānīyīna wa-ġayrihim min –l-umam*). Abū ʿAbdallāh Muḥammad b. Aḥmad b. Yusūf al-Ḫuwārizmī, *Mafātīḥ al-ʿUlūm*, ed. G Van Vloten (Leiden: Brill, 1895; repr., Cairo: al-Hayʾah al-ʿĀmmah li-Quṣūr aṯ-Ṯaqāfah, 2004. Edited by Muḥammad Ḥusayn ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz). 5; Kees Versteegh, *Landmarks in Linguistic Thought III: The Arabic Linguistic Tradition* (London: Routledge, 1997). 255-256; Yaḥyā b. ʿAdī, *Maqālāt Yaḥyā b. ʿAdī al-Falsafīyah*, ed. Saḥbān Ḫulayfāt (Amman: Manšūrāt al-Ǧāmiʿah al-Urdunīyah, 1988). 414-424, 423.

[693] Fritz Zimmermann wrote:

> The clash between Hellenists and anti-Hellenists in the controversy over logic and grammar, by bringing pride and prejudice to the fore, further inhibited dispassionate discussion. At the same time, however, this clash is evidence of intense contact between the two subjects … pointed silences may have played an important part in the debate and … each side may have paid far more attention to the other than it cared to acknowledge.

In this context, Zimmermann discusses "significant agreements" between al-Fārābī and his grammarian contemporary Ibn as-Sarrāǧ (Abū Bakr Muḥammad, d. 316/929). Zimmermann, *Commentary and Short Treatise*, cxix-cxxi, cxxxviii. Further evidence of al-Fārābī's sensitivity to these dynamics can be extracted from his apparent avoidance of Arabic grammar as a source for the consideration of indefinite nouns in Aristotle's logical works. For details of the avoidance, see: Black, "Aristotle's 'Peri hermeneias'," 64-65, 68.

preferred Arabic grammar to Greek philosophy, and who subscribed to the Arabic rather than the Classical Language Tradition, were anti-hellenic. Ragib, whose approach to language as polysemic and ambiguous puts him squarely in the Arabic Language Tradition, chose the Neoplatonic inheritance of late antiquity as the source for the vast majority of his ethical work. Ragib was culturally prepared to quote Aristotle in his ethics, and equally certain that Aristotle should not be part of his Quranic exegesis. Ragib was able to compartmentalize based on genre or discipline.

The boundaries between genres and disciplines, and their interactions with the culture clash described above, also explain the failure of Aristotle's works on language and poetry to influence scholars like Ragib. As Black and others have shown,[694] Aristotle's *Rhetoric* and *Poetics* came into the Arabic-speaking world as an integral part of an *Organon* centered on logic. They were therefore studied by those Arabic scholars who were working in the *Organon* tradition, and ignored by those working outside it.[695] This was in contrast to Aristotelian and Neoplatonic ethics, the transmission of which was much less tightly attached to the *Organon* and its logic. Furthermore, one can imagine that had a scholar like Ragib come into contact with the approach to language and its use embodied in Aristotle's *Rhetoric* in particular, he would have thought it more applicable to his ethics and *adab* than his hermeneutic, theological, and poetic

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[694] ———, *Logic and Aristotle's Rhetoric and Poetics*.

[695] For example, a note on the manuscript of the *Rhetoric* edited by M. C. Lyons reads: "not many of those who read in the craft of logic (*qurrāʾ ṣināʿati –l-manṭiq*) have come to study this book". The thrust of this note is that students of logic are the book's natural readership, but because the book is little known and poorly transmitted, they have failed to make use of it. Aristotle, *Aristotle's Ars Rhetorica. The Arabic Version*, ed. M. C. Lyons, 2 vols. (Cambridge: Pembroke Arabic Texts, 1982). 1:ii, xxvi. The author of the note appears to have been Ibn as-Samḥ (Abū ʿAlī, Christian and pupil of Yaḥyā b. ʿAdī, d. 418/1027), but for uncertainty on this attribution, see: ibid., iv-vi. Heinrichs, albeit addressing a later period than that of Ragib, remarks that "[l]ogical poetics (and rhetoric) and indigenous poetics and literary theory did not often rub shoulders. Most practicioners of the latter ignored what the logicians had to say…". Wolfhart Heinrichs, "Takhyīl: Make-Believe and Image Creation in Arabic Literary Theory," in *Takhyīl: the Imaginary in Classical Arabic Poetics*, ed. G. J. H. van Gelder and Marlé Hammond (Cambridge: Gibb Memorial Trust, 2008), 9.

considerations of language, mind, and reality. The questions that Aristotle asks in his *Rhetoric* about how language persuades, and about the tropes of pleasure, youth, and old age, are the same questions that are addressed in Ragib's literary compendia and ethics.[696]

Making the distinction between the Arabic and the Classical Languages Traditions therefore has a number of advantages. It highlights a persistent philosophical difference between conceiving of language as a solution and conceiving of language as a problem. It reminds us that mediaeval Islamicate intellectual culture was engaged in an argument about which intellectual heritage was best. Finally, it helps explain the otherwise puzzling fact that a scholar like Ragib could have been ethically philhellenic but linguistically Arabic.

Expressions, Ideas, Logic, and Homonymy in the Classical Language Tradition

Al-Kindī (Abū Yūsuf Yaʿqūb b. Isḥāq, d. ca. 252/866) was perhaps the most substantial early Arabic philosopher to work on the *Organon* tradition,[697] and the trope of Arabic as a language notable for its polysemy can be found in his works just as it can in the theory of his contemporary aš-Šāfiʿī. He wrote that while the mutual resemblance of words and their derivations was a feature of all languages, this was particularly frequent in Arabic to the extent

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[696] Cf. Aristotle, *On Rhetoric. A theory of civil discourse*, ed. George A. Kennedy, trans. George A. Kennedy (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007). 16. The divisions sketched out here would, of course, change after Ragib's death, due in part to the efforts of Avicenna to come to terms with Aristotle's *Rhetoric* and *Poetics* through a more resolutely Arabic vocabulary than al-Fārābī had used. Avicenna's analysis of the role of imagination (*taḫyīl*) may then have impacted later Arabic poetics, most notably those of al-Ǧurǧānī. This process can be mapped through the volume of collected texts and studies edited by van Gelder and Marlé Hammond, and introduced by Heinrichs. Black, *Logic and Aristotle's Rhetoric and Poetics*, 180-209; G. J. H. van Gelder and Marlé Hammond, *Takhyīl: the Imaginary in Classical Arabic Poetics* (Cambridge: Gibb Memorial Trust, 2008). 2 (and passim).

[697] Although it should be noted that Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ had already produced an analytical synopsis of the *Organon* (or more exactly: Porphyry's *Eisagoge* and Aristotle's *Categories*, *On Interpretation*, and *Analytics*) in the mid-eighth century. He began with the observation that Porphyry had been concerned with the status of logical terminology (*al-asmāʾ* in *al-manṭiq*) and the need for both the words (*al-asmāʾ*) and the process by which they were named (*at-tasmīyah*) to be explained. Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ, "al-Manṭiq," 1.

that a single name could be used for two opposites.[698] Elsewhere, as part of his explanation that

Hellenistic philosophy (*al-falsafah*) is the study of universals rather than particulars, he uses the

pairing of expression and idea: "we say that every expression must either have an idea behind it,

or not" and only those expressions that have ideas matter in philosophy.[699] The vocabulary that

constituted Ragib's theory of meaning, and Sībawayh's account of polysemy, was therefore

equally familiar to a scholar working on the *Organon* like al-Kindī.

The pairing of expression and idea was just as present in the work of Ragib's contemporary

Avicenna, nearly two centuries later. Avicenna explains Aristotle's inclusion of composite

negative nouns such as "not human" or "not seeing" alongside simple nouns like "human" in the

same way that Ragib might explain a polysemic problem of interpretation: "the expression 'not'

and the expression 'seeing' both indicate an idea, and the combination of their two ideas is the

idea of the 'not human' whole".[700] Avicenna's explanation also relies on the concept of

composite ideas. The multiple ideas of animal, living, speaking, and dying can be substituted for

with a single expression "human".[701]

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[698] *ištibāha –l-asmāʾi ... wa-t-taṣrīfa wa-l-ištiqāqāti ... wa-in kānat kaṯīratan fī-l-luġati –l-ʿarabīyati fa-innahā ʿāmmatun li-kulli luġatin fa-inna fī-l-luġati –l-ʿarabīyati anwāʿan kaṯīran min tašābuhi –l-asmāʾi ḥattā inna –l-isma –l-wāḥidi la-yūḍaʿu ʿalā ḍiddayni ğamīʿan.* This remark comes at the beginning of al-Kindī's letter to his pupil (the son of the caliph, Aḥmad b. al-Muʿtaṣim) *On the Clarification that the Highest Sphere Bows Down to and Obeys God* (*fī–l-ibānati ʿan suğūd –l-ğarmi –l-aqṣā wa-ṭāʿatihī li-llāhi ʿazza wa-ğall*). Abū Yūsuf Yaʿqūb al-Kindī, *Oeuvres philosophiques et scientifiques d'al-Kindī*, ed. Roshdi Rashed and Jean Jolivet (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1997).

[699] *fa-naqūlu inna kulla lafẓin fa-lā yaḥlū min an yakūna ḏā maʿnan aw ġayra ḏī maʿnā fa-mā lā maʿnā lahū fa-lā maṭlūba fīhi wa-l-falsafatu innamā taʿtamidu mā kāna fīhi maṭlūb.* From al-Kindī's *On the First Philosophy* (*fī-l-falsafati –l-ūlā*). Ibid., 43.

[700] *wa-lafẓatu –l-lā wa-lafẓatu –l-baṣīri yadillāni ʿalā maʿnan wa-yataʾallafu min maʿnayhimā maʿnā –l-kull.* Aristotle, "On Interpretation," 16a.30; Abū ʿAlī al-Ḥusayn Avicenna (Ibn Sīnā), "aš-Šifāʾ: al-Manṭiq III (al-ʿIbārah)," in *aš-Šifāʾ*, ed. Ibrāhīm Madkūr (Cairo: Dār al-Kātib al-ʿArabī, 1970; reprint, Qum: Ẓovī el-Qurbā, 2007), 12. Cf. Black, "Aristotle's 'Peri hermeneias'," 67.

[701] Avicenna writes:

> The composition may be … composed of two ideas … for which a single expression can be substituted. For example 'Zayd is a speaking, dying, animal'. The part of this phrase 'speaking, dying, animal' is a

The motivation behind Avicenna's explanation is Aristotle's text, and therefore by extension, the need to establish the types of words that can be used to construct syllogisms and the relationship between their single or composite natures. The model was constructed for a very different purpose that that of Ragib's, where the motivation was the need to give both a hermeneutical account of linguistic ambiguity and a poetic account of metaphor and imagery. Nevertheless, the result of the two processes is analogous. Both models use the pairing of expression and idea to represent the interaction of language and mind, and both models describe a situation in which a single expression denotes multiple ideas. Ragib would have included this phenomenon under the category of prolixity (*basṭ*), and Avicenna called it a composition of ideas (*tarkīb bayna maʿnīyayn*) being exchanged for a single expression (*badlahū lafẓun mufrad*), but the concepts are closely related. This raises the intriguing possibility that Avicenna did not influence subsequent work in poetics of scholars such as al-Ǧurǧānī so much through his work on Aristotle's *Rhetoric* and *Poetics* as through his work on logic and Aristotle's *On Interpretation*.

Avicenna, of course, wrote more than just extended *Organon* commentary. He made more use of the indigenous Arabic pairing of expression and idea in his *Išārāt wa-Tanbīhāt* (*Pointers and Reminders*), where he wrote that "there is a certain relationship between the expression and the idea", the nature of the ideas can be affected by the nature of the expression, and the logician must therefore take heed of actual expressions in the languages in which they are couched.[702]

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composition that acts in this way, and a single expression like 'human' can be substituted for it. (*kāna –t-tarkību … bayna maʿnīyayni fīhimā tarkībun … wa-yumkinu an yakūna badlahū mufradun ka-qawlinā Zaydun ḥayawānun nāṭiqun māʾitun fa-inna tarkība –l-ǧuzʾi minhu wa-huwa qawlunā ḥayawānun nāṭiqun māʾitun tarkībun bi-hāḏihī -ṣ-ṣifati wa-yaqūmu badlahū lafẓun mufrad*).

Avicenna (Ibn Sīnā), "al-ʿIbārah," 32-33. Cf. Black, "Aristotle's 'Peri hermeneias'," 67.

[702] *bayna –l-lafẓi wa-l-maʿnā ʿalāqatun mā wa-rubbamā aṯārat aḥwālun fī-l-lafẓi fī aḥwāli –l-maʿnā fa-li-ḏālika*

The requirements of the logician reappear shortly afterwards, when Avicenna lays out a theory of meaning designed to meet syllogistic, rather than poetic, requirements. Therein, expressions can indicate ideas through congruence (*muṭābaqah*), in which each expression stands opposite its idea (the relationship between the idea of a three sided shape to the expression "triangle"), or through implication (*taḍammun*; the relationship between the expression "shape" and the idea of a triangle), or concomitance (*al-istibtāʿ wa-l-iltizām*) in which one idea requires that another follow it (the relationship between the expression "ceiling" and the idea of a wall supporting it).[703] Congruence is analogous to Ragib's understanding of a literal relationship between expression and idea according to fiat coinage. Avicenna's implication is necessary for the logical accomodation of the relationships between universals, such as that between a species and the genus in which it is included. There is no foregrounding of mechanisms that accommodate linguistic ambiguity therein, but the third category of concomitance is potentially analogous to Ragib's analysis of how one idea can lead to another in poetic metaphor, and indeed to al-Ǧurǧānī's ideas that are subsequent to other ideas (*maʿnā al-maʿnā*).

In between al-Kindī and Avicenna, and equally firmly in the Classical Language Tradition, al-Fārābī eschewed the indigenous vocabulary of expression and idea in favour of expressions and intelligibles (*maʿqūlāt*) at several points in his works. It is in al-Fārābī that we get the statement that logic is the grammar of the mind and that the grammatical rules of syntax are analogous to the logical rules of thought.[704] Al-Fārābī also argued that expressions reliably

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yulzamu –l-manṭiqīyu ayḍan an yurāʿī ǧāniba –l-lafẓi –l-muṭlaqi min ḥayṯu ḏālika ġayru muqayyadin bi-luġati qawmin dūna qawm. Abū ʿAlī al-Ḥusayn Avicenna (Ibn Sīnā) and Naṣīr ad-Dīn aṭ-Ṭūsī, *al-Išārāt wa-t-Tanbīhāt*, ed. Sulaymān Dunyā, Third Edition ed., 4 vols. (Cairo: Dār al-Maʿārif, 1983-1994). 1:131.

[703] Ibid., 1:139. The translations are taken from W.P. Heinrichs, "Naḳd," in *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*, ed. P. Bearman, Th. Bianquis, C.E. Bosworth, E. van Donzel, and W.P. Heinrichs (Brill Online: Brill, 2012).

[704] Black, "Aristotle's 'Peri hermeneias'," 49; Abū Naṣr Muḥammad al-Fārābī, *Iḥṣāʾ al-ʿUlūm*, ʿUṯmān Amīn (Cairo:

imitate intelligibles, and that Aristotle (on whose *On Interpretation* al-Fārābī was commenting) was able to explain the composition of intelligibles by substituting expressions for them exactly because the two sides corresponded with each other.[705]

Language, in fact, could be used in two different ways. Al-Fārābī distinguished between the investigation of expressions in linguistic contexts, which had the potential to cause confusion and error, and the investigation of expressions in so far as they were simply a convenient substitute for intelligibles. The first type of investigation was that found in Aristotle's *Sophistical Refutations* (in which he combated language manipulated in order to deceive), *Rhetoric*, and *Poetics* (in which language was manipulated for literary effect).[706] The second type of investigation was that found in logic, and these two ways of approaching language are themselves the two separate philosophical approaches that I have sought to capture with the labels of the Arabic and the Classical Language Traditions. When laid out by a logician, however, they make a very clear argument, which is that logic is concerned with linguistic expressions for only two reasons. Expressions either matter because their ambiguity needs to be

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Dār al-Fikr al-ʿArabī, 1949). 54.

[705] In the background of al-Fārābī's discussion of whether Aristotle, in *On Interpretation*, was talking about expressions as used in language or about intelligibles in people's minds was the long-established debate about the subject matter of both *On Interpretation* and *Categories*. Throughout late antiquity, the commentary tradition has struggled with the question of whether the discussions of names that appear in these two parts of the *Organon* should be understood as discussions of words, or as discussions of things and ideas. The underlying concern was whether or not language was part of logic. Perhaps the most influential compromise position (and certainly one influential on al-Fārābī) was that of Porphyry (d. ca. 305), who wrote that Aristotle's *Categories* was about "words in so far as they signify things". Later, Simplicius (fl. 529) would put more stress on the signification than the things, arguing that *Categories* was concerned with "the words … that signify … [beings] *qua* significant". Centuries later, Avicenna would quote and reject Porphyry, arguing that the *Categories* were things that just happened (and indeed needed) to have fixed names (*wa-ʿalayhā taqaʿu –l-alfāẓu –l-mufradatu -ʿtiqādan mawḍūʿan musallaman*). The consensus among modern commentators is with Avicenna, that Aristotle was discussing things: "Aristotle relies greatly on linguistic facts and tests, but his aim is to discover truths about non-linguistic things" (J. L. Ackrill). Aristotle and Ackrill, *Categories*, 71; Avicenna (Ibn Sīnā), "al-Maqūlāt," 6-7; Black, "Aristotle's 'Peri hermeneias'," 59; Sabra, "Avicenna," 762; Richard Sorabji, *The Philosophy of the Commentators, 200 - 600 AD: a Sourcebook. Vol. 3: Logic and Metaphysics.* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2005). 61f, 69.

[706] Black, "Aristotle's 'Peri hermeneias'," 59; al-Fārābī, *Šarḥ al-ʿIbārah*, 25; Zimmermann, *Commentary and Short Treatise*, 13.

erased, or (and indeed subsequently) expressions matter as inevitable yet substantively

unimportant substitutes for concepts and things.

By pairing expressions with intelligibles (*maʿqūlāt*) and not with ideas (*maʿānī*), al-Fārābī

makes it clear that he is not working with the theory of meaning that dominated the Arabic

Language Tradition.[707] But al-Fārābī did use the term *maʿnā* to talk about language. He wrote

that Aristotle's discussion at the end of the first chapter of *On Interpretation* is a statement that

expressions and intelligibles resemble each other with regard to truth and falsity.[708]

Combinations (i.e. predications) of expressions can be true or false, and commensurately

combinations of intelligibles can be true or false. A single expression or a single intelligible,

however, cannot be true or false. "Man" or "whiteness" on its own cannot be true or false,

"except that every single expression indicates the idea that it was intended to explicate".[709] The

idea that is indicated by an expression can then either be an imaginary conception in the soul

(*ḫayāl fī-n-nafs*), or an intellectible in the mind (*maʿqūl*) that itself relies on something in

external physical reality (*tastanidu ilā mawǧūdin min ḫāriǧ*). If we were to say "goat-stag", then

our speech would "indicate an idea conceived in our heart, of an animal half of which is the body

of a goat and half of which is the body of a stag". This idea could then not be true or false.[710]

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[707] The "linguistic Hellenism" that Zimmermann identified as an aspect of al-Fārābī's thought is relevant here: "[al-Fārābī's] show of deference to Greek grammar makes sense only as a gesture designed to hurt the pride of Muslim Arab scholarship". Cf. note 693. ———, *Commentary and Short Treatise*, cxxxiv, cxxxvii.

[708] This is an accurate paraphrase. Aristotle, "On Interpretation," 16a.9; al-Fārābī, *Šarḥ al-ʿIbārah*, 26; Zimmermann, *Commentary and Short Treatise*, 14. It should be noted here that Zimmermann corrects Kutsch and Marrow's ordering of the folios. Ibid., cxliii-cxliv, 12 (note 1).

[709] *illā anna kulla wāḥidin min || –l-alfāẓi –l-mufradati dāllun ʿalā –l-maʿnā –llaḏī quṣida –l-ibānatu ʿanhu bihī*. al-Fārābī, *Šarḥ al-ʿIbārah*, 27, 28; Zimmermann, *Commentary and Short Treatise*, 14-15. The notation || represents the point where the folios are incorrectly ordered in Kutsch and Marrow.

[710] *fa-inna qawlanā ʿanzāyyilu qad yadillu ʿalā maʿnan mutaṣawwarin fī-ḍ-ḍamīri wa-huwa ḥayawānun naṣfuhū badnu ayyilin wa-naṣfuhū badnu ʿanz*. al-Fārābī, *Šarḥ al-ʿIbārah*, 28; Zimmermann, *Commentary and Short Treatise*, 15. The imaginary "goat-stag" appeared in Aristotle's *On Interpretation*. Aristotle, "On Interpretation,"

I would like to read al-Fārābī's switch between intelligible and idea in this passage as follows. Ideas are linguistic; they are that to which the expressions refer, and they cannot be conceived of apart from the expressions. Intelligibles, on the other hand, are a subdivision of ideas and they are concepts in the mind that can exist devoid of linguistic expression.[711] Scholars in the Arabic Language Tradition such as Ragib dealt only in ideas because they assumed no potential for a sphere of conception or understanding that was unconnected to language. A scholar in the Classical Language Tradition such as al-Fārābī wanted both to distinguish himself from the Arabic Language Tradition, and to focus on a logical mentality wholly separated from, and indeed superior to, language. He associated intelligibles with logic and ideas with language, associations that would also be reflected in the work of Ragib's contemporary Miskawayh.[712] Al-Fārābī was committed to the paradigmatic attitude of the Classical Language Tradition: we do not need linguistic expression in order to think, just to express our thoughts.[713] A century later,

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16a.15f. See also note 425.

[711] Elsewhere, al-Fārābī uses three terms: *alfāẓ* (expressions), *maʿānī* (ideas linked to expressions), and *maʿānī maʿqūlah* (ideas not linked to expressions). Abū Naṣr Muḥammad al-Fārābī, *al-Alfāẓ al-Mustʿamalah fī-l-Manṭiq*, ed. Muhsin Mahdi (Beirut: Dār al-Mašriq, 1968; repr., Alexandria: 2002). 100.

[712] In a review of Aristotle's *Organon*, Miskawayh wrote that: "syllogisms are composed of expressions and ideas" (*al-qiyāsu fa-iḏā huwa murakkabun min alfāẓin wa-maʿānin*), and that while a minimum of two expressions are required for a premise, "the smallest number of syllogistic *ideas* that are required is two *intelligibles* [in one premise] and two intelligibles [in the other]" (My emphasis) (*wa-aqallu –l-maʿānī –l-qiyāsīyati mā kāna min maʿūlayni maʿqūlayn*). Aḥmad b. Muḥammad Miskawayh, *Kitāb as-Saʿādah li-Ibn Miskawayh fī Falsafat al-Aḫlāq*, ed. ʿAlī aṭ-Ṭūbǧī as-Suyūṭī (Cairo: al-Madrasah aḍ-Ḍāʿīyah al-Ilāhīyah, 1917). 66. On this work of Miskawayh's see: Dimitri Gutas, "Paul the Persian on the classification of the parts of Aristotle's philosophy: a milestone between Alexandria and Bagdad," *Der Islam* 60(1983): 231, 234.

[713] Al-Fārābī makes this argument in *al-Alfāẓ al-Mustʿamalah fī-l-Manṭiq* (*The Expressions Used in Logic*) and in doing so quotes Aristotle's statement in *On Interpretation* that apodeictic proof comes from "internal speech" rather than "external speech" (*an-nuṭq aḏ-ḏāḫil* (Badawī has *al-bāṭin*) as opposed to *an-nuṭq al-ḫāriǧ*). Aristotle, *Organon Aristotelis*, 340; ———, "Posterior Analytics," in *Loeb Classical Library: Aristotle II* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1960; reprint, 1997), 76b.25; al-Fārābī, *al-Alfāẓ*, 102.

Avicenna agreed: "speaking about the expressions that correspond to their ideas is equivalent to speaking about the ideas, although the use of expressions is more practical".[714]

For al-Fārābī, "goat-stag" is both an expression and an idea, but not an intelligible. It is not founded on any external physical reality, but instead represents a person's internal subjective imagination. As such, it has little value in logic. Intelligibles, on the other hand, can be predicated with other intelligibles to form the premises of a syllogism or other logical construction. For scholars in the Arabic Language Tradition like Ragib, in the absence of a need to construct statements in correct logical form there is no such firm distinction between predicable objective ideas and imaginary subjective ideas. Ideas are just ideas, and expressions refer to them. Ideas in the Arabic Language Tradition are also not understood as subjective. For ideas to work in poetry, for example, they must be accessible to all language users and therefore part of an objective reality, albeit neither external nor physical. The "goat-stag" in poetics is therefore an objective entity in the mind, just like "the hand of the northwind".

That the attitude to homonymy constitutes a major difference between the Arabic and the Classical Language Traditions is clear. For scholars like Ragib it is a hermeneutical and poetic opportunity while for Aristotle and his followers in the logical tradition it is a difficulty to overcome before logic can start to work. However, the Classical Language Tradition is broader than just philhellenic scholars working on the *Organon*. It included scholars working in theology, and scholars whose cited lists of authorities did not include Aristotle. One such scholar, the Muʿtazilī al-Qāḍī ʿAbd al-Ǧabbār, thought that homonymy was a problem, and a threat.

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[714] *fa-inna -l-kalāma ʿalā –l-alfāẓi –l-muṭābaqati li-maʿānīhā ka-l-kalāmi ʿalā maʿānīhā illā anna waḍʿa –l-alfāẓi aḥsanu ʿamalan*. For Avicenna, the subject matter of logic is single ideas (*maʿnā wāḥid mufrad*) and combined ideas (*maʿānin muʿallafah*), and only the latter can create decisive logical assent to a proposition (*taṣdīq*) while the former creates only the initial conception of an idea (*taṣawwur*). Expressions are not necessary for logic *qua* logic, but they are necessary for its communication. Avicenna (Ibn Sīnā), "al-Madḫal," 21, 22 (lines 13f), 23 (lines 3-4); Black, "Aristotle's 'Peri hermeneias'," 54-55; Sabra, "Avicenna," 752.

ʿAbd al-Ǧabbār was a contemporary of Ragib's, a representative of the Muʿtazilī school of theology with which we have seen Ragib engage so closely,[715] and he shared Ragib's acceptance of the potential language had for ambiguity. Thereafter, however, the two scholar's attitudes, approaches, and models diverged completely. Ragib exemplified the Arabic Language Tradition while ʿAbd al-Ǧabbār shared the Classical Language Tradition's prejudice against language as a means of conveying the truth. And while for those working on the *Organon* that truth could be derived from the predicated logical statements of humanity, for ʿAbd al-Ǧabbār the truth in play was the divine monotheistic justice of God. We have moved from a difference in philosophy of language between logicians on the one hand and littérateurs, theologians and grammarians on the other, to differences in philosophy of language between theologians themselves.

ʿAbd al-Ǧabbār's theory of meaning was one in which intent was everything.[716] Language was therefore understood when the context in which it was uttered was known and analysed.[717] He used a concept that originated in legal theory, and maybe even in logic, to describe the

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[715] Margaretha Heemskerk, "ʿAbd al-Jabbār b. Aḥmad al-Hamaḏānī," in *Encyclopaedia of Islam, THREE*, ed. Gudrun Krämer, Denis Matringe, John Nawas, and Everett Rowson (Brill Online: Brill, 2009); Wilferd Madelung, "ʿAbd al-Jabbār b. Aḥmad," in *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, ed. Ehsan Yarshater (New York: Iranicaonline Website, 1982); Peters, *God's created speech*; Reynolds, "Rise and Fall."

[716] Intent was a reflection of human will (*irādah*), a central concept in ʿAbd al-Ǧabbār's theology. It is the will (not the ability, *qudrah*) that specifies whether an expression (*lafẓ*) is a predicate (*ḫabar*) or imperative (*amr*). Without intent (*qaṣd*) language has no meaning. With intent, we can make "Zayd" mean any number of Zayds we want. al-Qāḍī ʿAbd al-Ǧabbār, *al-Muġnī*, 6.2:8-12, 17-19. My thanks to Philip Pilkington for this reference. Cf. Larkin, *The Theology of Meaning*, 32-38; Vishanoff, *Islamic Hermeneutics*, 116f, 134-135.

[717] "Context" (*ḥāl al-mutakallim*) was one of two things required for speech to have meaning. The other was *muwāḍaʿah*, the lexicon in communicative human usage. al-Qāḍī ʿAbd al-Ǧabbār, *al-Muġnī*, 16:347. *Muwāḍaʿah* was translated by Schöck as *Festsetzung* ("fixing"), by Vasalou as "convention", and described by Peters as "man comes to a convention and in this way makes a language". Larkin, *The Theology of Meaning*, 37-38; Peters, *God's created speech*, 387; Schöck, *Koranexegese*, 382; Sophia Vasalou, ""Their Intention Was Shown By Their Bodily Movements": The Basran Muʿtazilies on the Institution of Language " *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 47, no. 2 (2009): 212.

additional evidence (*qarīnah*) that had to be brought to bear on each speech act.[718] The door

would seem to be open for a consideration of linguistic ambiguity, but in fact ʿAbd al-Ǧabbār

slammed it shut with an explicit commitment to resist and refute polysemy. The concept of

enantiosemy (*aḍdāḍ*) that we have seen so lovingly enumerated in the Arabic Language

Tradition, was for ʿAbd al-Ǧabbār an epistemological threat to hermeneutics, and consequently a

threat to religion. Polysemy leads us to "lose faith in the true meanings of words".[719]

My reading of ʿAbd al-Ǧabbār's position is that it was in all likelihood influenced by the

discipline of logic, and the study of the *Organon*, that was so well-developed by his time. He

described the possibility that a word could mean two things at once as anathema to reason, and

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[718] The idea that the status of some linguistic acts was ambiguous until a piece of supplementary evidence (*qarīnah*) had been provided, often from context, was developed in legal theory. Wael B. Hallaq, "Notes on the Term *qarīna* in Islamic Legal Discourse," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 108, no. 3 (1988); Schwarb, "Capturing the Meanings," 130 (note 82). Schöck draws a persuasive conceptual parallel between *qarīnah* and the term *sūr* in the logical tradition. Schöck, *Koranexegese*, 383. The Iḫwān aṣ-Ṣafāʾ for example, use *sūr* to describe the extra things that people need to say in order to ensure that their speech is accurately understood. Speech without such a quantifier is indeterminate (*muhmal*). Iḫwān aṣ-Ṣafāʾ, *Rasāʾil, Beirut*, 1:416. Their analysis in turn can be traced by to al-Fārābī's use of the term *sūr*, which Zimmermann then connects to what may have been early Syriac logic influencing Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ. Zimmermann, "Some Observations," 517, 529-531.

[719] ʿAbd al-Ǧabbār wrote that ideas (*maʿānī*) need to be establishable by human reason, whether that reason is intuitive/necessary (*iḍtirār*) or learnt/acquired (*iktisāb*). Then:

> it is not possible for us to believe that the rationale (*ʿillah*) that we cite as productive of a judgement is accompanied by another different idea that produces a different judgement, and that with that idea is a third idea, and so on for infinity or until the [erroneous] idea is found to be present. This also applies to the discussion of enantiosemy, that which is both praiseworthy and blameworthy at the same time, and those ideas that connect to contrary ideas. Such discourses [about language] invalidate the proofs, and should such doubt be accepted with regard to proofs then it would be even more acceptable with regard to matters of religion. Such discourses also lead us to lose faith in the true meanings of words, and to make claims about words without any indicators. Such practices lead to mutual ignorance about both words and ideas, and anything with that result must be condemned as corrupt.
> (*yaǧibu allā nuʾmina anna maʿa –l-ʿillati –llatī naddaʿī annahā muǧibatun li-l-ḥukmi maʿnā siwāhā huwa –l-mūǧibu li-l-ḥukmi dūnahā wa-maʿa ḏālika –l-maʿnā maʿnā ṯāliṯan ḥattā lā nantahī ilā ḥaddin illā wa-yumkiny ḏālika fīhi wa-ka-ḏālika –l-qawlu fī taḍāddi –l-ḍiddayni wa-mā yastaḥiqqu bihī –ḏ-ḏammu wa-l-madḥu wa-mā yataʿallaqu min –l-maʿānī bi-ġayrihī wa-fī ḏālika ibṭalu uṣūli –l-adillati wa-matā ǧāzat hāḏihī –š-šubhatu fīhā fa-fī –l-ʿibādāti aǧwazu wa-hāḏihī yuʾaddī ilā allā naṭiqu bi-ḥaqāʾiqi –l-asmāʾi wa-an yuddaʿā fīhā mā lā dalīla ʿalayhi wa-fī ḏālika irtikābu –t-taǧāhuli fī-l-asmāʾi wa-l-maʿānī ǧamīʿan wa-mā addā ilā ḏālika wuǧiba –l-ḥukmu bi-fasādihī*).

al-Qāḍī ʿAbd al-Ǧabbār, *al-Muġnī*, 7:14. Peters does not focus on this passage in his summary of this chapter. Peters, *God's created speech*, 308f.

destructive of our ability to draw conclusions from evidence. This position is analogous to Aristotle's desire to address polysemy at the start of *On Interpretation* in order to prevent it from undermining his teaching on logic, and to expose sophistical manipulations of polysemy in *Sophistical Refutations*. ʿAbd al-Ǧabbār agreed: homonymy was intended to cause deception.[720]

A word therefore cannot be, or mean, two things at once. This is the ontological and epistemological assumption behind ʿAbd al-Ǧabbār's argument that language (*al-kalām*) is only physical sound.[721] Language cannot be, as it was for Ragib, both the expressions and the ideas behind them. ʿAbd al-Ǧabbār believed that the ideas (*maʿānī*) in people's minds were only subjective, and that there was no connection between them and expressions that could be analysed.[722] Larkin persuasively attributes his motivation for this separation of expressions and ideas to his theological commitments, which include a refusal to contemplate the prospect of

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[720] ʿAbd al-Ǧabbār wrote that "the purpose of speech is to communicate and remove polysemy" (*anna mawḍūʿa –l-kalāmi huwa –l-ifādau wa-izālatu –š-širkah*). Furthermore "people use homonymous expressions in order to deceive" (*wa-innamā waḍaʿū –l-lafẓa –l-muštaraka li-īhāmin*). al-Qāḍī ʿAbd al-Ǧabbār, *al-Muġnī*, 16:351-352; Schöck, *Koranexegese*, 382f. Compare this to Aristotle's analysis of the six sophistical fallacies that are rooted in language: homonymy, ambiguity, synthesis, diaeresis, pronunciation, grammatical form. Aristotle, "On Sophistical Refutations," in *Loeb Classical Library: Aristotle III* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1955; reprint, 2000), 165b.23f.

[721] Larkin, *The Theology of Meaning*, 29-31, 68; Peters, *God's created speech*, 308-312; al-Qāḍī ʿAbd al-Ǧabbār, *al-Muġnī*, 7:14f.

[722] ʿAbd al-Ǧabbār's hypothetical interlocutor in this passage challenges him: "I know for sure that there is an idea in my heart that corresponds to these letters" (*innī aʿlamu bi-ḍtirārin fī qalbī maʿnan yuṭābiqu hāḏihī –l-ḥurūf*). ʿAbd al-Ǧabbār responds that his interlocutor does not know this, but only wishes it. Rather, this hidden speech (*kalām ḫafī*) is unknowable. "This hidden speech may then be mixed up with thought made up of the letters of [real] speech as a result of the soul's conversations [with itself]" (*wa-rubbamā yaltabisu ʿalayhi –l-fikru fī ḥurūfi –l-kalāmi bi-ḥadīṯi –n-nafs*). ʿAbd al-Ǧabbār is, on the one hand, clearly struggling to disentangle himself from linguistic metaphors, but more importantly he is also clearly trying to establish that the ideas in people's minds, which they think are connected to their expressions, are not actually connected to the expressions. Rather than the ideas (*maʿānī*) being objective and shared, as they are for Ragib, the ideas in people's minds are for ʿAbd al-Ǧabbār wholly subjective. ———, *al-Muġnī*, 7:15-16. It must however be remembered that ʿAbd al-Ǧabbār did not deny any connection between expressions and ideas, he just denied that "language" was composed of both. Elsewhere, he wrote that meaningful speech, including of course the Quran, was made up of expressions used to refer to ideas (*alfāẓ wuḍiʿat li-maʿānī*). Speech was meaningful when it indicated an idea, and indication (*dalālah*) occurred in three ways: by the expression, by a *qarīnah* (see note 718), or by reason (*ʿaql*). ibid., 16:349; Schöck, *Koranexegese*, 382-383.

God having ideas that might co-exist with him or need to be known by humans.[723] I would like to suggest an additional dimension for ʿAbd al-Ǧabbār's rejection of the notion that language could be both ideas and expressions: he tended to assume that a single word or thing could only mean one thing. In the case of language (*al-kalām*), that thing could only be the physical expressions of words by humans. Language could never have both a physical level and a mental level. It could never be both divine and profane. Ragib, of course, had expressed impatience with this refusal to contemplate polysemy.[724]

Larkin, Vishanoff, and I do all agree, however, on the importance of theological conviction in shaping ʿAbd al-Ǧabbār's positions.[725] He is at all times committed to separating God from humanity, and in the face of the Quranic revelation and the obsession with language that characterised the intellectual culture in which he lived, this led him to downplay and de-stress language in a way that is very reminiscent of the attitude of those working in the *Organon* tradition. Just as Avicenna was prepared to examine linguistic concerns only because they were an unavoidable necessity for the communication of ideas that the mind composed and connected,[726] so ʿAbd al-Ǧabbār wrote that the Quran was in effect an irrelevant linguistic byproduct of a divine message.[727] God's justice and unity made sense on their own in human

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[723] Larkin, *The Theology of Meaning*, 38. In the preceding pages, Larkin explains how it is intent behind speech (*qaṣd*) that is knowable, rather than the ideas behind it (*maʿānī*). The theological implication is clear: it is permissable for us to know what God *intended*, but not what he was actually *thinking*.

[724] Ragib implied in his discussion of the word "Quran" that the Muʿtazilah were naïve and essentialist in their refusal to conceive of the Quran as being in multiple places at once, both divine and human. See note 429.

[725] Vishanoff, *Islamic Hermeneutics*, 133.

[726] See note 714.

[727] He wrote that while humans can compel their audience to understand their intent through either speech or physical gesture, God's speech is different. Human speech (*al-ḫiṭāb*) is knowable (*mudrak*) whereas divine speech is unknowable (*lā yudrak*) because God is unknowable. For example (the example is mine), while one can know Zayd (*ʿalimtu Zaydan*) one cannot know God (*ʿalimtu –llāha*), a point with which Ragib agreed. Furthermore, ʿAbd al-

reasoning, and language, with its reliance on knowledge of context, could support that message but also corrupt it. Reason was paramount for both the philhellenic philosophers and Muʿtazilī theologians like ʿAbd al-Ǧabbār.

ʿAbd al-Ǧabbār's theological argumentation was also, of course, directed at the Ašāʿirah. It was their doctrine of speech on the lips versus speech in the soul (*kalām lafẓī / nafsī*) to which he was responding. That doctrine, which posited a *nafsī* Quran with God and a *lafẓī* Quran among humans, was designed with the same primary motivation as ʿAbd al-Ǧabbār's theology: to maintain the distance between the divine and humanity.[728] The Ašāʿirah set up two separate ontological categories of Quran (and by extension of "language"), but they often shared the Muʿtazilī prejudice in favour of words meaning just one thing that could then be argued about.[729] It was only scholars like Ragib, obsessed with language and more often than not directly engaged with literature as authors or critics, who went in a different direction. For while Ragib struggled throughout his theological writings to maintain and explain a complete separation between God and humanity, often doing so through the creative use of polysemic hermeneutics, he was completely comfortable with the equation of God's language with that of poets. In Ragib's intellectual worldview the divine and the human shared the same language with all its potential for ambiguity and eloquence. This is in direct contrast to the logicians of the *Organon* tradition,

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Ǧabbār wrote that with regard to the core theological priciples of God's unity and justice: "it is the reason that indicates this matter, and we know that God sent down that speech (i.e. the Quran) because it was in some way beneficial" (*inna –l-ʿaqla huwa –llaḏī yadillu ʿalā ḏālika –l-amri wa-naʿlamu annahū taʿālā anzala ḏālika –l-kalāma li-ḍarbin min –l-maṣlaḥah*). al-Qāḍī ʿAbd al-Ǧabbār, *al-Muġnī*, 16:354, 17:12; Ragib, *Quranic Glossary*, 560; Schöck, *Koranexegese*, 383-387.

[728] Al-Bāqillānī wrote that humans cannot say they "speak God's language" (*lā yaǧūzu an yaqūla aḥadun innī atakallamu bi-kalāmi –llāh*) when, for example, they recite the Quran. This was because God's speech needed to be entirely separate from that of humans, a point also made by Vasalou. Al-Bāqillānī also wrote that "the real language is the idea that exists in the soul" (*al-kalāmu –l-ḥaqīqīyu huwa –l-maʿnā –l-mawǧūdu fī-n-nafs*). See also note 431. al-Bāqillānī, *al-Inṣāf*, 101; Vasalou, "Institution of Language," 221.

[729] See, for example, the Ašʿarī analysis of the divine attributes, which is addressed above in chapter four (page 159f).

for whom language was an inconvenient obstacle, and to the Muʿtazilī theology of ʿAbd al-Ǧabbār, for whom language was mired in the human because it could not be two things at once. For the Classical Language Tradition therefore, human reason was the source of the human connection to the divine and the truth, whereas for the Arabic Language Tradition that connection lay in language itself.

Epilogue

The story about language told in this dissertation has ended in the eleventh century. Ragib dies around the year 1020, ʿAbd al-Ǧabbār in 1024, Avicenna in 1037, and al-Ǧurǧānī in 1078. The madrasa in its classical institutional form was born in 1067. It is tempting to make that latter date into a defining turning point for Islamicate intellectual culture, and while the reality is hardly likely to be as simple or convenient, it is true that the nature of the scholarship that was produced in the late eleventh and twelfth centuries was very different from what had gone before. In the works of Faḫr ad-Dīn ar-Rāzī and al-Ġazālī in particular, the relationship between language, mind, and reality is sliced up in a very different way to that found in Ragib or his predecessors in the Arabic Language Tradition.

The new consensus that would come to dominate madrasa scholarship in the subsequent centuries can perhaps best be described as a synthesis of the Arabic and Classical Language Traditions. This synthesis relied on the achievement of Avicenna, whose thoroughgoing analysis of the *Organon* tradition was written in an Arabic that was accessible, and that minimalized the self-conscious neologisms that had characterised al-Fārābī's previous bold attempt at synthesis. The new synthesis also relied on the achievement of al-Ǧurǧānī, whose analysis of exegetical and profane poetics built on a tradition of Arabic literary criticism that was approximately half a millenium old by the eleventh century.

Was Ragib as significant for the centuries to come as these great names? It seems unlikely. His role in this dissertation has been as a perfect example of a tradition that would never be the same again after the eleventh century. In Ragib's works we can see an eclecticism and pluralism that allowed him to maintain Ibn Ḥanbal as an influence and authority while writing ethical guidance for the Muslim community that was based on the Neoplatonic ethics attributed to Aristotle and Plato. This synthesis would be the same as that attempted by al-Ġazālī, whom we of course know was an avid consumer of Ragib's ethical works. Ragib's poetics also made some strides in the typology and analysis of complex metaphor that may have contributed to al-Ǧurǧānī's theory. However, it is just as likely that al-Ǧurǧānī was building on the work of other literary scholars, or indeed on ideas contained in the logical works of Avicenna.

The Arabic Language Tradition as understood in this dissertation therefore died in the eleventh century, to be replaced by a new synthesis with the Classical Language Tradition that had been its rival. However, the obsessions with language that it embodied would continue to play a substantial role in defining the intellectual culture of the subsequent centuries, in which the consumption and creation of literature in the forms of both poetry and *adab* would become no less important. The obsession with language would also find a home in the taxonomies of coinage developed in the discipline of *ʿilm al-waḍʿ* studied by Bernard Weiss.

The Arabic Language Tradition, with its focus on linguistic ambiguity and its obsessive engagement with the pairings of expressions and ideas, has not been fully appreciated in scholarship before this dissertation. More work remains to be done on its central early figures, although the success of that work may depend on the potential for further manuscript discoveries from those first centuries of intellectual endeavour. More work also remains to be done outside

the discipline of legal theory, a sub-field in which Vishanoff has recently made persuasive arguments about rival approaches to language and the law.

Perhaps the most important lacuna is the need to address the great figures of the eleventh century in terms of their attitudes to language, with sensitivity to the linguistically obsessed culture in which even philhellenic philosophers like Avicenna were working. Frank Griffel's recent work on al-Ġazālī has taken steps in this direction,[730] but all too often scholars like Avicenna and even al-Fārābī are considered solely in the context of their dominant influence (the *Organon* tradition) and without sufficient reference to the rigorous and complex attitudes to language that can be found in Arabic, and that are unconnnected to the *Organon*. Those rigorous and complex attitudes have been the subject of this dissertation.

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[730] Frank Griffel, *Al-Ghazālī's Philosophical Theology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009).

APPENDIX ONE: MANUSCRIPTS

Description of the London *Quranic Glossary*

Library of Muhammad Luṭfī al-Ḫaṭīb, Private Collection, London. Title piece on f.1a in Abbasid Bookhand script:[731] *Mufradāt Ġarīb al-Qurʾān al-Karīm | li-Abī -l-Qāsim al-Ḥusayn b. Muḥammad b. | al-Mufaḍḍal al-maʿrūf bi-r-Rāġib al-Iṣfānī [sic.] | adāma -llāh ʿulāhu wa-aṭāla -llāh fī-l-ʿizz wa-n-niʿam baqāhu [sic.]*. Author's name in incipit: *fa-yaqūl al-faqīr Ḥusayn b. Muḥammad b. al-Mufaḍḍal al-Maʿrūf bi-r-Rāġib al-Iṣfahānī ballaġahū allāh al-amānī*. Thick white Arabic paper, low pulp quality with high interference and visible fibres, little to no burnishing, faint and irregular chain lines approx. 50mm apart, thick laid lines with irregularities between 27 and 34mm apart (vertical to spine in f.1 and f.2, horizontal to spine in remainder of text block), reed or grass laid mould. Page 200x170mm, written area 160x110mm, 21 lines per page, no rulings. No foliation. 40 II/III (222). The quire at ff.192-195 is upside down. Textblock in angular scholar's *nasḫ* bookhand fully pointed and unvocalised. No catchwords. Chapter headings (the letters of the alphabet) shaded in red, rubricated entry titles. Type III pasteboard binding, leather covering, central lozenge almond shape floral stamp (mandorla) cf. Déroche Type Osh8[732] on upper and lower covers together with embossed chain frame. Chevron endbands in blue and yellow appear relatively new, textblock is bound too tightly resulting in loss of some marginalia close to spine. Frequent marginal commentary in several hands in some cases marked with rubricated "*ḥāšiyah*", frequent collation marks (usually minor textual variations or scribal

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[731] See Gacek, *Vademecum*, 1-2.

[732] François Déroche, Annie Berthier, M I Waley, and Al-Furqan Islamic Heritage Foundation, *Islamic Codicology: an introduction to the study of manuscripts in Arabic script* (London: Al-Furqan Islamic Heritage Foundation, 2006). 303.

omissions, errors, and illegibilities) with ḫ [*nusḫah uḫrā*] and ṣḥ [*ṣaḥḥa*]. Anonymous marginal

note with bibliographical assertions on f.51a in recent hand.[733] Purchase and reading notes on

f.1a as discussed in chapter two above. Colophon dated Muḥarram 409 / May-June 1018.

Multiple impressions of seal dated 976/1568 with which Esmehan Sultan, daughter of the

Ottoman Sultan Selim II (reg. 974/1566-982/1574), endows the manuscript to her madrasa in the

Eyüp quarter of Istanbul (*waqf ismīhān sulṭān bint salīm ḫān madrasatahā fī abī ayūb al-anṣārī*

976).[734] After the colophon (ff.206b-218a) Ragib's methodological introduction to the Exegesis

has been copied out in full in a different hand (rounded scholar's *nasḫ* bookhand), starting just

after the introduction with: *bi-ḥaqqin ṣāra –l-kalāmu ṯalāṯata aqsām…*[735] Three folios of this

text have become detached from the codex at f.207a. The detached folios start with: *wa-ḏālika*

bi-ḥasabi -ʿtibāri –l-muḫāṭib…[736] and end with: *…fa-qṭaʿ lubānata man taʿarraḍa waṣluhū*.[737]

This witness to the methodological introduction is undated, and has an anonymous quotation

after it on f.218a. The last two folios of the detached section also contain undated Hadith

(scholar's *taʿlīq* bookhand) and invocations.

The change in orientation of the laid lines in the first two folios as opposed to the rest of the

text block and an apparent slight change in hand between f.2b and f.3a (from more rounded to

more angular hand, and from thicker to thinner calamus) both point to the replacement of the

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[733] al-Ǧawharǧī, "Ra'y fī Taḥdīd," 199-200.

[734] I am grateful to Betsy Omidvaran for her help with this seal.

[735] Ragib, *Methodological Introduction and Exegesis ed. Farḥāt*, 28. ———, "Methodological Introduction ed. Nāhī," 80.

[736] ———, *Methodological Introduction and Exegesis ed. Farḥāt*, 38. ———, "Methodological Introduction ed. Nāhī," 86.

[737] ———, *Methodological Introduction and Exegesis ed. Farḥāt*, 46. ———, "Methodological Introduction ed. Nāhī," 91.

first two folios at an early stage, certainly before 420/1029 when the first note on f.1a was written. The overtight binding and apparently recent chevron endbands point to later repairs, which may have taken place in the Al-Assad National Library in Damascus. The manuscript's owner, Muḥammad Luṭfī al-Ḫaṭīb, tells of taking it to this library for scanning and then removing it when the library staff began to cut the binding to facilitate the scanning and he suspected theft. The resulting confusion may have been what led al-Ǧawharǧī, who saw the manuscript when it was in the National Library, to confuse the plates in his article. He provides accurate images of f.51a and f.206a (the colophon) but inaccurate images of the title page and a folio with Hadith notes.[738] The anonymous note on f.51a discussed by al-Ǧawharǧī may also date from this period of confusion, and could have been written by a Damascus library staff member attempting to remove and substitute the title page.

Description of *Ragib on Innovative Figures of Speech* (*Kitāb min Kalām ar-Rāǧib fī-l-Badīʿ / Afānīn al-Balāǧah*)

Title on f.1a in textblock hand: *Kitāb min Kalām ar-Rāǧib fī-l-Badīʿ*. Title on upper doublure with question mark: *Afānīn al-Balāǧah* (*The Diversity of Eloquence*). Title in catalogue: [*Afānīn al-Balāǧah*], "title supplied by Dr. Landberg".[739] Incipit f.1b: *al-ḥamdu li-llāhi muʿṭī –l-insāna faḍīlata –l-lisāni taqwiyatan li-iʿǧāzi –l-qurʾāni ¶ | wa-ṣallā –llāhu ʿalā nabīyihī –l-muḫtāri muḥammadin wa-ālihī –l-aḫyāri ¶ | saʾaltum adāma –llāhu –l-imtāʿa bi-kum*

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[738] al-Ǧawharǧī, "Ra'y fī Taḥdīd," 197-200. Al-Ǧawharǧī's article is reproduced with the incorrect plates in as-Sārīsī, *Fī-d-Difāʾ*, 49-56.

[739] Leon Nemoy, *Arabic Manuscripts in the Yale University Library*, Transactions of the Connecticut Academy of Arts and Sciences (New Haven: Yale University Library, 1956). 41.

an umliya mā yuǧʿalu amāratan fī naqdi | -l-ašʿāri... Explicit f.39b: *wa-n-naqli | wa-l-qalbi wa-t-tabdīli wa-huwa aḫḏu -ṭ-ṭarīqati wa-tanāwulu –l-lafẓi*. The text breaks off in the chapter on types of literary plagarism (*Fī Anwāʿ as-Sariqāt*), which is the last chapter according to the table of contents on f.3a-b. Good quality thick Arabic paper, brown biscuit colour, slight burnishing, clumping in pulp, fine fleck intrusions, opaque. Hard to discern laid lines vertical to spine with occasional irregularities (slants eg. f.17a) at approx. 7 per 10mm. Thick (1.5mm) and vague chain lines 26-30mm apart very rarely discernable (eg. f.16a) with horizontal slant from left to right. Grass (?) laid mould. Page 165x130mm, written area 135x95mm, 13-15 lines per page, no rulings, English foliation every five folios at top left in pencil. V-½(39), 3V(30). Quire signatures at f.10a, f.20a, f.30a. No catchwords. Clear bold scholar's *nasḫ* bookhand fully pointed and partially vocalised in places. Chapter titles in larger (double/triple size) *nasḫ* with consistent head serifs to right on *alif*. Type III thin pasteboard binding covered in patterned red and green leaf design. Closed volume 10mm thick with dark red paper spine. Good preservation with occasional worm holes. Repaired and trimmed probably at time of binding with loss of some marginalia. Some smudges and repairs cover text. Collation marks throughought, both *ṣḥ* [*ṣaḥḥa*] (eg. f.17b) and *ṭ* [*maḫṭūṭah uḫrā*]. Some marginalia marked as *"ḥāšiyah"* eg. f.2a, f.8b. Title page has calculations and prices for foodstuffs. Lower cover doublure has unvowelled note in different hand partially obscured by doublure hinges: [---] *ḥayṯu qāla –l-muṣannifu raḥimahū –llāhu maʿa*[---] | [---] *an-nufūsu –n-nāṭiqatu iḏā ẓahara la-hā min ṣānih*[---] | [---] *–l-ḥaqāʾiqu taksibu –l-maǧhūla min –l-muṭṭah*[---] |.

Description of Chester Beatty AR 5277 (*On Creeds*)

Title on f.1a (scholars *nasḫ* bookhand ≠ textblock): *Kitāb aš-Šayḫ Abū al-Qāsim al-Ḥusayn b. Muḥammad b. al-Mufaḍḍal ar-Rāġib fī-l-ʿAqāyid [sic]*. Author's name in incipit: *aš-Šayḫ Abū al-Qāsim al-Ḥusayn b. Muḥammad b. al-Mufaḍḍal ar-Rāġib*. Medium-good quality Arabic paper, light brown, light burnishing, rare and slight interference, regular (?) but hard to discern straight chain lines horizontal to spine 20-30mm apart, regular and distinct laid lines with some variations vertical to spine at 7 per 10mm and 0.5mm (?) wide, reed or grass laid mould. Page 165x125mm, written area 130x90mm (+/-0.5mm), 18 (occ. 17) lines per page, no visible rulings. Irregular Latin foliation in pencil top left, Arabic pagination up to f.57. 12 IV (96), V-2 (104). Textblock in rounded scholar's *nasḫ* bookhand fully pointed and unvocalised, catchwords ≠ textblock hand, red overlines for *qāla* etc, some red shading in early pages, all rubrication decreases towards end, black triangular shading between *ṣād* and *lām* of *faṣl* in chapter headings throughout. Type III pasteboard binding (appears to be original), leather covering, central lozenge almond shape floral stamp (mandorla) on upper and lower covers (Ottoman?) cf. Déroche type OAi.[740] Sparse collations marks, both *ṣ* [*ṣaḥḥa*] (eg. f17b) and *ṭ* [*maḫṭūṭah uḫrā*] (eg. f.28a), editing marks and suggestions in Western (?) hand in first 57 folios. Prayers and poetry on upper cover doublure and title page, one couplet on lower cover doublure, aphorisms (*ḥikam*) and poetry, prayers, Hadith on ff.103b-104a. Poem of 96 lines in *nastaʿlīq* hand ff.102b-103b as noted on title page titled: *Nafaḥāt Manāzil as-Sāʾirīn wa-Rašaḥāt Mutaʾaḥḥil al-ʿĀrifīn*. Purchase note dated 1109/1697 on f.103b.[741]

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[740] Déroche, Berthier, Waley, and Foundation, *Islamic Codicology*, 306.

[741] Cf. al-ʿAġalī, who appears to take the phrase "…into the ownership of its [i.e. this note's] scribe…" to mean "…into the ownership of its [i.e. this work's] scribe…" (*…ilā mulki kātibih…*). The purchase note is in a thick Mamluk *nasḫ* scholar's bookhand ≠ the textblock. Ragib, *On Creeds*, 11.

Annotated list of Ragib's Work in Manuscript Catalogues around the World (a work in progress)

Notes and Observations

The manuscripts that I have been able to consult in Istanbul and elsewhere have their references in bold type. Those listings not in bold are taken from the sources referenced.[742] I have also included (in italics), in those cases where I have been able to verify them, the false attributions and cataloguing errors that inevitably abound.

The *Quranic Glossary* has the largest number of recorded copies at over eighty worldwide, *Littérateurs Replies* comes in at around two thirds of that number, *The Path to the Nobilities* and *Analysis of the Two Creations* at less than half, and then the ten or so copies of the *Exegesis*. The documentation of dating is patchy, but these approximate numbers appear to be evidence that Ragib's exegetical, ethical and *adab* works were all popular across the centuries, albeit with nothing approaching the popularity of the *Quranic Glossary*. In light of the number of false attributions identified in copies of the *Exegesis*, the caveat remains that many of the witnesses in the subsequent lists are probably false. For example, al-Iskāfī's *Durrat at-Taʾwīl wa Ġurrat at-Tanzīl* (see above) has often been catalogued as the *Exegesis*.

The oldest manuscript is the London *Quranic Glossary*, dated in or around Ragib's lifetime. We then have *The Confluence of Eloquence* (Ahmed III 2390 dated 521/1127),

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[742] The long list in *al-Fihris aš-Šāmil* (FS) collects the references to Ragib's *tafsīr* manuscripts. Royal Academy for Islamic Civilization Research, *al-Fihris aš-Šāmil li-l-Turāṯ al-ʿArabī al-Islāmī al-Maḫṭūṭ: ʿulūm al-qurʾān maḫṭūṭāt at-tafsīr wa-ʿulūmuh*, 2 vols. (Amman: Manšūrāt al-Maǧmaʿ al-Malakī li-Buḥūṯ al-Ḥaḍārah al-Islāmīyah, 1986). 1:125-126. Karabulut's Arabic-language union catalogue (K) collates the catalogues and handlists of the Turkish collections themselves, although he is forced to admit, for example: …"and there are many copies in Istanbul libraries.." even after his long list of *Quranic Glossary* witnesses. Karabulut, *Muʿǧam al-Maḫṭūṭāt*, 1:470-472. Brockelmann's references (GAL, GALS) are understandably incomplete. Brockelmann, *GAL*, 1:289. ———, *GALS*, 1:505.

Littérateurs' Ripostes (British Museum ADD 18529 dated 523/1129), *The Path to the Nobilities* (Laleli 1744 dated 545/1150), *Abridgement of 'The Reform of Speech'* (at-Taymūrīyah 137 Luġah reported as dated 552/1157), and *Analysis of the Two Creations* (Yahuda 3555 dated 584/1188) all from around a century or more after his death. The oldest manuscript of *On Creeds* comes a good century later (Āstān-e Quds-e Rażāvī 56 dated 679/1280), and everything else is even later still, or undated. This reaffirms the importance of the London *Quranic Glossary*, and throws into sharp contrast our dependence on the indigenous manuscript tradition.

The dominance of Istanbul, and indeed the libraries of Turkey in general, is, as noted above, testament to the power of the Ottoman empire and the efforts it made to collect cultural capital in manuscript form. The worldwide spread of the remainder of the witnesses is testament to the difficulties faced by both their cataloguers and those who want to read them. It is also a reaffirmation of the fact that a bad printed edition is better for scholarship than no edition at all.

Exegesis of the Quran (*Tafsīr*)[743]

Atıf Efendi 180 ≠ *Ragib. Anonymous and undated commentary on the Anwār at-Tanzīl of al-Bayḍāwī, incorrectly ascribed to Ragib on endpaper preceding textblock.*

Atıf Efendi 362-002 (methodological introduction - Quran 2:126). Süleymaniye. Istanbul. Attributed to Ragib in incipit.

Ayasofya 212 (methodological introduction - Quran 2:223). Süleymaniye. Istanbul. Attributed to Ragib in incipit.

Carullah 84 (Quran 1:1-5:120). Süleymaniye. Istanbul. (Carullah is usually *Walī ad-Dīn Ǧār Allāh* in Arabic-language catalogues). Section from Quran 3:89 (f.228b) to Quran 4:63

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[743] See also the note describing a quotation from the *Exegesis* on f.1a of Carullah 2080. Franz Rosenthal, *Knowledge triumphant: the concept of knowledge in medieval Islam* (Leiden: Brill, 1970). 39 note 2.

(f.273b) missing and replaced with whiter paper and more rounded scholar's *nasḫ* bookhand. Catalogued incorrectly as *Tafsīr al-Iṣfahānī* by Maḥmūd b. Abī al-Qāsim b. Aḥmad Šams ad-Dīn al-Iṣfahānī (674/1275-749/1349).[744] Anonymous and undated.

Carullah 85 *≠ Ragib (Quran 1:1-18:100). Süleymaniye. Istanbul. Attributed to "Iṣfahānī" on title page and undated.*

Carullah 86 *≠ Ragib (Quran 12:1-33:73). Süleymaniye. Istanbul. Attributed to Šams ad-Dīn al-Iṣfahānī in colophon at Quran 12:111,[745] and in title page note recording copying from autograph of Šams ad-Dīn al-Iṣfahānī's Anwār al-Ḥaqāʾiq dated 746/1345. Cf. the Anwār al-Ḥaqāʾiq autograph in the Süleymaniye (Laleli 138).*

Emanet Hazine 1616 (methodological introduction – Quran 2:6). Titled *an-Nukat al-Qurʾānīyah*. Topkapı Palace. Istanbul. Attributed to Ragib in incipit.[746]

Fazıl Ahmed Paşa 100 *≠ Ragib. Anonymous and dated 734/1334. The text on Quranic inimitability at the start of this manuscript is close, but not identical, to that of the ninth-century Zaydī exegeses collected by ʿAbdallāh aš-Šarafī (d. 1652).[747]*

Feyzullah Efendi 2141-001 *≠ Ragib (Quran 1:1). Anonymous and dated 1091/1690.*

Feyzullah Efendi 62, 63 ≠ Ragib. Millet Kütüphanesi.[748]

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[744] Although Šams ad-Dīn al-Iṣfahānī wrote his own name as reproduced here (see his autograph on Carullah 86 and Laleli 138), it tends to be given in the biographical tradition as Šams ad-Dīn sAbū aṯ-Ṯanāʾ Maḥmūd b. ʿAbd ar-Raḥmān b. Aḥmad al-Iṣfahānī. Kaḥḥālah, *Muʿǧam al-Muʾallifīn*, 3:814.

[745] Ragib, *Exegesis ed. aš-Šidī*, 393.

[746] ———, *Methodological Introduction and Exegesis ed. Farḥāt*, 22 (with plates). ———, *Exegesis ed. aš-Šidī*, 391-392 (with plates).

[747] ʿAbdallāh b. Aḥmad aš-Šarafī, *al-Maṣābīḥ as-Sāṭiʿah al-Anwār: tafsīr ahl al-bayt: al-Imām al-Qāsim b. Ibrāhīm, al-Imām Muḥammad b. al-Qāsim, al-Imām Yaḥyā b. al-Ḥusayn*, ed. Muḥammad Qāsim al-Hašamī (Sa'dah: Maktabat at-Turāṯ al-Islamī, 1998). 87-89.

[748] Ragib, *Exegesis ed. aš-Šidī*, 395.

Feyzullah Efendi 69 (methodological introduction – Quran 2:223). Millet Kütüphanesi. Copied from Ayasofya 212.[749]

Feyzullah Efendi 2141. *Süleymaniye. Istanbul, Turkey. Title page (f.1a) attributes Tafsīr al-Fātiḥah to Ragib, but the text (ff.1b-16b) is not Ragib's Exegesis. Dated 1091/1680.*

Raza Library II 47/97. Rampur, India. GALS.

Sana'a al-Ğāmiʿ al-Kabīr ≠ Ragib? (Muḫtaṣār at-Tafsīr). Sana'a, Yemen. The text provided by the cataloguer does not tally with any of Ragib's works and Dāwūdī was unsure of the attribution on consultation of the manuscript.[750]

03 Gedik 17308/1 ≠ *Exegesis. Afyon Gedik Ahmet Paşa İl Halk Kütüphanesi. Milli Kütüphane-Ankara (Qarah Ḥiṣār in Arabic-language catalogues). Incorrectly titled Taḥqīq al-Bayān, this is a copy of Ragib's The Path to the Nobilities dated 1015/1605.[751]*

Laleli 171 (methodological introduction – Quran 2:6). Süleymaniye. Istanbul. Attributed to Ragib in incipit.

London Quranic Glossary (methodological introduction). Undated. See Appendix.

Maktabat al-Qādirīyah 60 ≠ Ragib (Ğāmiʿ at-Tafsīr) (Quran 23f). Baghdad. Aš-Šidī reports on the basis of an undated Ph.D. thesis by Muḥammad Iqbāl Farḥāt (az-Zaytūnah University, Tunis) that the Ragib manuscripts catalogued as being in Baghdad are either not by Ragib or are no longer there.[752]

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[749] Ibid., 390-391.

[750] ———, *Quranic Glossary*, 9. Aḥmad ibn ʿAbd ar-Razzāq Ruqayḥī, ʿAbd Allāh Muḥammad Ḥibšī, and ʿAlī Wahhāb Ānisī, *Fihrist Maḫṭūṭāt Maktabat al-Ğāmiʿ al-Kabīr Ṣanʿāʾ*, 4 vols. (Sana'a: al-Jumhūrīyah al-ʿArabīyah al-Yamanīyah / Wizārat al-Awqāf wa-al-Iršād, 1984). 1:211.

[751] Turkish Ministry of Culture and Tourism, "Turkey Manuscripts Online Database," http://www.yazmalar.gov.tr/.

[752] ʿImād ʿAbd as-Salām Raʾūf, *al-Āṯār al-Ḫaṭṭīyah fī al-Maktabah al-Qādirīyah fī Ğāmiʿ aš-Šayḫ ʿAbd al-Qādir al-Kīlānī bi-Baġdād* (Baghdad: Maṭbaʿat al-Iršād, 1974). 86. Ragib, *Exegesis ed. aš-Šidī*, 394.

At-Taymūrīyah 361 (methodological introduction). Cairo, Egypt. Farḥāt.[753]

32 Yalvaç 178 (*Tafsīr*). Bölge Yazma Eserler Kütüphanesi. Konya, Turkey.[754]

Yusuf Aga 19 ≠ Ragib. Konya (accessible through Süleymaniye, Istanbul). Anonymous, titled

    Tafsīr al-Kitāb al-ʿAzīz, catalogued as Anwār al-Ḥaqāʾiq by Šams ad-Dīn al-Iṣfahānī, and

    dated 685/1286.

Quranic Glossary (*Mufradāt Ġarīb al-Qurʾān al-Karīm*)

ʿAbd al-Ḥasan al-Asadī 3. Al-Kāẓimīyah, Iraq. FS. Mīr Lawḥī.[755]

Adab 27. Alexandria, Egypt. "Fragment". GAL.

Amasya Beyazıt İl Halk Kütüphanesi 05 Ba 1433. Istanbul, Turkey. Yazmalar.[756]

ʿĀrif Ḥikmet 68. Medina, Saudi Arabia. FS. K. Dāwūdī .[757]

ʿĀrif Ḥikmet 69. Medina, Saudi Arabia. FS. Dāwūdī.[758]

Asir Efendi 1120. Süleymaniye. Istanbul, Turkey.[759]

Āstān-e Quds-e Rażāvī 3/219. Mashhad, Iran. FS. Handlist. Mīr Lawḥī. GALS.[760]

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[753] ———, *Methodological Introduction and Exegesis ed. Farḥāt*, 22. I have been unable to find reference to this manuscript in the published catalogues of the Taymūrīyah.

[754] Turkish Ministry of Culture and Tourism, "http://www.yazmalar.gov.tr/".

[755] Manuscripts with "FS" are from Royal Academy for Islamic Civilization Research, *al-Fihris aš-Šāmil*, 1:125-126. Volume II contains a key to the manuscript libraries and catalogues cited. Mīr Lawḥī, *Rāġeb*, 229.

[756] Catalogued at: Turkish Ministry of Culture and Tourism, "http://www.yazmalar.gov.tr/".

[757] Cf. ʿUmar Riḍā Kaḥḥālah, *al-Muntaḫab min Maḫṭūṭāt al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah* (Damascus: Majmaʿ al-Luġah al-ʿArabīyah bi-Dimašq, 1973). 6, 122. Ragib, *Quranic Glossary*, 39.

[758] ———, *Quranic Glossary*, 39.

[759] Kütüphane-i Asir Efendi, "Kütüphane-i Asir Efendi," in *Nuruosmaniye Kütüphanesinde mahfuz kütüb-ü mevcudenin defteri* (Istanbul: Dersaadet, 1888), 7.

[760] Cf. Sayyed ʿAlī Ardalān-e Ğavān, *Fehrest-e Kutub-e Ḫaṭṭī-ye Ketābḫānah-ye Markazī-ye Āstān-e Quds-e Rażāvī*,

Āstān-e Quds-e Rażavī 1554. Mashhad, Iran. FS. Handlist. Mīr Lawḥī.[761]

 Atıf Efendi 278. Süleymaniye. Istanbul, Turkey. K.

Atıf Efendi 362. Süleymaniye. Istanbul, Turkey. FS. Cf. GALS.

Atıf Efendi 378. Süleymaniye. Istanbul, Turkey. FS.

Al-Awqāf 1076. Baghdad, Iraq. FS.

Ayasofya 432. Süleymaniye. Istanbul, Turkey. FS, K, GALS.

Berlin Staatsbibliothek 675/966. Germany. Dated 1265/1849. FS. Ahlwardt. GAL.[762]

Bešir Aga 77. Süleymaniye. Istanbul, Turkey. FS, K, GALS.

Carullah 445. Süleymaniye. Istanbul, Turkey. K.

Carullah 446. Süleymaniye. Istanbul, Turkey. K.

Carullah 2048. Süleymaniye. Istanbul, Turkey. FS.

Damad Ibrahim 312. Süleymaniye. Istanbul, Turkey. K.

Damad Ibrahim 313. Süleymaniye. Istanbul, Turkey. K.

Esad Efendi 3279. Süleymaniye. Istanbul, Turkey. K, GALS.

Fatih 5272. Süleymaniye. Istanbul, Turkey. K.

Feyzullah Efendi 365. Süleymaniye. Istanbul, Turkey. K.

Feyzullah Efendi 2107. Süleymaniye. Istanbul, Turkey. FS, K, cf. GALS.

Feyzullah Efendi 2108. Süleymaniye. Istanbul, Turkey. FS. K.[763]

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25 vols. (Mashhad: Ketābḫānah-ye Markazī-ye Āstān-e Quds-e Rażavī, 1986). 1:582. Cf. Muḥammad Āṣef Fekrat and Muḥammad Vafādār Murādī, *Fehrest-e Alefbā'ī-ye Kutub-e Ḫaṭṭī-ye Ketābḫānah-ye Markazī-ye Āstān-e Quds-e Rażavī* (Mashhad: Kitābḫānah-ye Markazī-ye Āstān-e Quds-e Rażavī, 1990). 543. Mīr Lawḥī, *Rāġeb*, 228.

[761] Īraǧ Afšār, Muḥammad Taqī Dānišpažūh, Muḥammad Bāqir Ḫuǧǧatī, and Aḥmad Munzavī, *Fehrest-e Kitābhā-ye Ḫaṭṭī-ye Ketābḫānehā-ye Millī-ye Malik vābastah bi-Āstān-e Quds-e Rażavī*, 13 vols. (Tehran: Kitābḫānehā-ye Millī-ye Malik, 1973). 1:718. Mīr Lawḥī, *Rāġeb*, 228.

[762] Cf. Ahlwardt, *Verzeichnis*, 1:268.

[763] Karabulut, *Muʿǧam al-Maḫṭūṭāt*, 1:471.

Feyzullah Efendi 2141. Süleymaniye. Istanbul, Turkey. ff.81a-252b. Dated 1092/1681. FS.

Ǧāmiʿat Baṣrah 348. Basra. Iraq. Dated 1061/1651. FS.

Hadāʾī 114. Selim Ağa Kütüphanesi, Üsküdar, Istanbul, Turkey. K.

Halet Efendi 28. Süleymaniye. Istanbul, Turkey. FS. K.

Hamidiye 190. Süleymaniye. Istanbul, Turkey. FS. K.

Hamidiye 191. Süleymaniye. Istanbul, Turkey. FS. K.

Al-Ḥaram 137. Mecca, Saudi Arabia. FS.

Dār al-Kutub al-Miṣrīyah. Dated 732/1091. Cairo, Egypt. Fihrist. Cf. GAL, GALS. [764]

Kiliç Ali 176. Süleymaniye. Istanbul, Turkey. FS, GALS, K.

Kiliç Ali 177. Süleymaniye. Istanbul, Turkey. FS, GALS, K.

Khuda Bakhsh Oriental Library 1484. Patna, Bihar, India. Dated 1088/1677. FS. GALS. Cf.
   GAL

Köprülü 1577. Süleymaniye. Istanbul, Turkey. Dated 722/1322. FS. Şeşen. GAL.[765]

Laleli 3632. Süleymaniye. Istanbul, Turkey. FS, K, GALS.

London *Quranic Glossary*. United Kingdom. Dated 409/1018. See above.

Al-Maḥmūdīyah 138/218/228. Mecca, Saudi Arabia. Dated 1054/1644. FS, Kaḥḥālah,
   Dāwūdī.[766]

Al-Maḥmūdīyah 2019. Mecca, Saudi Arabia. Dāwūdī.[767]

Maktabat al-Qādirīyah 99. Baghdad, Iraq. Acephalous. Note at end:

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[764] Dār al-Kutub al-Miṣrīyah, *Fihrist al-Kutub al-ʿArabīyah al-Maḥfūẓah bi-l-Kutubkhānah al-Khidīwīyah*, 7 in 8 vols. (Cairo: Maṭbaʿat ʿUṯmān ʿAbd ar-Razzāq, 1888-1893). 1:216.

[765] Şeşen, *Fihris Kūprīlū*, 2:98.

[766] Kaḥḥālah, *al-Muntaḫab*, 122. Ragib, *Quranic Glossary*, 39.

[767] ———, *Quranic Glossary*, 39.

this book has been rescued from the River Tigris after it was thrown there by the Tatars, may God curse them, in the year 656 of the Prophet's hiǧrah, and I am al-faqīr ilā-llāh ʿAbdallāh b. Muḥammad b.ʿAbd al-Qādir al-Makkī.

FS. Mīr Lawḥī. Raʿūf.[768]

Manisa Akhisar Zeynelzade Koleksiyon 45 Ak Ze 476. Manisa İl Halk Kütüphanesi. Manisa, Turkey. Yazmalar.[769]

Manisa İl Halk Kütüphanesi 45 Hk 2080. Manisa, Turkey. Dated 714/1314. Yazmalar.[770]

Manisa İl Halk Kütüphanesi 45 Hk 4383. Manisa, Turkey. Dated 1168/1753. Yazmalar.[771]

Michigan University Library Sulaiman Purchase Collection. [al-Mufradāt fī ġarīb al-Qur'ān, 19th century?] Former shelfmark: Mich. Isl. Ms. temp. no. 179. United States.[772]

Mingana 44/1248. Selly Oak Colleges Library, Birmingham, United Kingdom. Dated 1190/1776. FS.

Muhammad Yakun [?] Paşa. Milli Kütüphane. Ankara, Turkey. FS.

Murad Molla 313. Süleymaniye. Istanbul, Turkey. FS, K.

New Series 114. Princeton University Library, United States. Dated 1269/1853. Mach and Ormsby.[773]

Nuruosmaniye 599. Süleymaniye. Istanbul, Turkey. FS. K.

Nuruosmaniye 600. Süleymaniye. Istanbul, Turkey. FS. K.

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[768] Raʿūf, *al-Āṯār al-Ḫaṭṭīyah*, 125. Mīr Lawḥī, *Rāġeb*, 229.

[769] Scanned images viewed at:Turkish Ministry of Culture and Tourism, "http://www.yazmalar.gov.tr/".

[770] Scanned images viewed at: ibid.

[771] Catalogued at: ibid.

[772] Available online at: http://hdl.handle.net/2027/mdp.39015079132174.

[773] Rudolf Mach and Eric L. Ormsby, *Handlist of Arabic Manuscripts (New Series) in the Princeton University Library* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987). 174.

Nuruosmaniye 601. Süleymaniye. Istanbul, Turkey. FS. K.

Ragıb Paşa 1448. Süleymaniye. Istanbul, Turkey. K.

Rashed Efendi 1424. Istanbul, Turkey. Dated 998/1590. FS. Cf. K.

Reşit Efendi 1424. Istanbul, Turkey. Dated 1167/1754. FS.

Reşit Efendi 117. Istanbul, Turkey. FS.

Raza Library 620. Rampur, India. FS. GALS.

Raza Library 621. Rampur, India. FS.

Ṣanʿāʾ al-Ǧāmiʿah al-Kabīr 203. Sana'a, Yemen. Dated 819/1306. FS. Ruqayḥī.[774]

Ṣanʿāʾ al-Ǧāmiʿah al-Kabīr 219. Sana'a, Yemen. Dated 1306/1889. FS. Ruqayḥī.[775]

Selim Ağa 145. Süleymaniye. Istanbul, Turkey. Dated 1160/1747. FS, K.

Selim Ağa 146. Süleymaniye. Istanbul, Turkey. Dated 1172/1759. FS, K, GALS.

Tehran University 553. Tehran, Iran. Mīr Lawḥī.[776]

Tokat İl Halk Kütüphanesi 60 Hk 181. Ankara, Turkey. Yazmalar.[777]

Topkapı Palace 1747. Istanbul, Turkey. 1167/1754. FS.

ʿUmūmī. Kitābḫāne-ye ʿUmūmī Ḥażrat-e Naǧafī Marʿašī. Qum, Iran. Dated 701/1302. Purchase
    note dated 735/1335. Marʿašī and Ḥusaynī.[778] Cf. Mīr Lawḥī.[779]

ʿUmūmī. Kitābḫāne-ye ʿUmūmī Ḥażrat-e Naǧafī Marʿašī 7863. Qum, Iran. Mīr Lawḥī.[780]

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[774] Ruqayḥī, Ḥibšī, and Ānisī, *Fihrist*, 1:219-220.

[775] Ibid.

[776] Mīr Lawḥī, *Rāǧeb*, 228.

[777] Scanned images viewed at: Turkish Ministry of Culture and Tourism, "http://www.yazmalar.gov.tr/".

[778] Maḥmūd Marʿašī and Aḥmad Ḥusaynī, *Fehrest-e Nusḫehā-ye Ḫaṭṭī Kitābḫāne-ye ʿUmūmī Ḥażrat-e Ayāt Allāh al-ʿUẓmā Naǧafī Marʿašī*, 40 vols. (Qum: Ṣadrā, 1975). 12:291.

[779] Mīr Lawḥī, *Rāǧeb*, 224-227.

Umumiya 278/558. Bayezıd. Istanbul, Turkey. FS. K.

Veliyuddin 445. Süleymaniye. Istanbul, Turkey. FS. GALS.

Veliyuddin 446. Süleymaniye. Istanbul, Turkey. FS. GALS.

Veliyuddin 447. Süleymaniye. Istanbul, Turkey. FS. GALS.

Veliyuddin 448. Süleymaniye. Istanbul, Turkey. FS. GALS.

Vehid Paşa 394. Süleymaniye. Istanbul, Turkey. K.

Yaʿqūb Sarkīs 104. Baghdad University, Iraq. FS.

Yehuda 4784. Princeton University Library, United States. Dated 1166/1753. FS. Mach.[781]

Yeki Cami 58. Süleymaniye. Istanbul, Turkey. K.

Yeni Cami 58. Süleymaniye. Istanbul, Turkey. FS. GAL.

Yeni Cami 159. Süleymaniye. Istanbul, Turkey. FS. GAL.

Aẓ-Ẓāhirīyah 7979. Damascus, Syria. Dated 903/1498. Ḥasan, Ḥimsī.[782] (Dated 1288/1871. FS.)

Aẓ-Ẓāhirīyah 7051. Damascus, Syria. Dated 1166/1753. FS. Ḥasan, Al-Ḫiyāmī, Ḥimsī.[783]

On Creeds (*al-Iʿtiqādāt*)

Āstān-e Quds-e Rażāvī 56. Mashhad, Iran. Catalogued as *Taḥqīq al-Bayān*. Dated 679/1280.

Acephalous, starting towards end of chapter four (*fī ṣuwarin muḫtalifah*… p.151 in al-

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[780] Ibid., 228.

[781] Rudolf Mach, *Catalogue of Arabic Manuscripts (Yahuda Section) in the Garrett Collection* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977). 16.

[782] ʿIzzat Ḥasan, *Fihris Maḫṭūṭāt Dār al-Kutub aẓ-Ẓāhirīyah* (Damascus: al-Maǧmaʿ al-ʿIlmī al-ʿArabī, 1947-). 396-397. Asmāʾ Ḥimsī, *Fihris Maḫṭūṭāt Dār al-Kutub aẓ-Ẓāhirīyah: ʿulūm al-luġah al-ʿarabīyah al-luġah, al-balāġah, al-ʿurūḍ, aṣ-ṣarf* (Damascus: Maṭbaʿat at-Taraqqī, 1973). 161.

[783] Ḥasan, *Fihris*, 396-397. Ṣalāḥ Muḥammad Ḫiyāmī, *Fihris Maḫṭūṭāt Dār al-Kutub aẓ-Ẓāhirīyah: ʿulūm al-qurʾān*, 3 vols. (Damascus: Maǧmaʿ al-Luġah al-ʿArabīyah bi-Dimašq, 1983). 2:293. Ḥimsī, *Fihris*, 162.

ʿAǧalī's edition). The section on the knowledge of God (*maʿrifat allāh*) that al-ʿAǧalī places at the end of chapter two (pp.39-63) comes at the end of the manuscript, after chapter eight. This fact is alluded to in an internal colophon f.75a, following which is an text on the investigation of the word "one" (*taḥqīq al-wāḥid*, ff.75b-76b), at the end of which comes the dated colophon. This text is introduced with the scribal phrase: "this was at the end of the book" (*kāna fī āḫiri –l-kitābi hāḏā*) and its content is very close to, and in some places repeats, Ragib's discussions of "one" elsewhere.[784] GAL, GALS, Library Catalogue, Ṭalas, Al-Aǧālī, Mīr Lawḫī.[785]

Şehid Ali 382. Süleymaniye. Istanbul, Turkey. Titled *Risālah fī-l-Iʿtiqād* (*Epistle on Creed*) Dated 15 Rabīʿ al-Awwal 961 / 18 February 1554. The third in a collection of works copied in the same hand, the first of which is *Analysis of Forty Hadith* (*Taḥrīǧ al-Aḥādīṯ al-Arbaʿīn*) by Ṣadr ad-Dīn Abū ʿAbdallāh Muḥammad b. Ibrāhīm as-Sulamī (742/1342-803/1401),[786] and the second of which is *Risālah fī-l-Iʿtiqād* by ʿAlāʾ ad-Dīn al-Buḫārī (completed on 14 Ṣafar 961 / 18 January 1554).[787] Both of these works appear to be unpublished. *On Creeds* starts on f. 17b and ends on f.52b. The section on the knowledge of God (*maʿrifat allāh*) that Āstān-e Quds-e Rażāvī 56 places after chapter eight is omitted, as is a small section on God's attributes (pp.74-79 missing at f.22b), and the manuscript

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[784] Ragib, *On Creeds*, 68-71. ———, "One and Absolute One."

[785] Ǧavān, *Fehrest*, 1:57-58. Asʿad Ṭalas, "Nafāʾis al-Maḫṭūṭāt al-ʿArabīyah fī-l-Mašhad ar-Riḍawī al-Muṭṭahar," *Maǧmaʿ al-Luġah al-ʿArabīyah bi-Dimašq (RAAD)* 24, no. 2 (1949): 276-277. Ragib, *On Creeds*, 11. Mīr Lawḫī, *Rāġeb*, 232-237 (with plates).

[786] Kaḥḥālah, *Muʿǧam al-Muʾallifīn*, 3:25.

[787] Possibly ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz b. Aḥmad b. Muḥammad al-Buḫārī (d. 730/1330), or ʿAlī b. Muḥammad al-Buḫārī (fl. 823/1420). Ibid., 2:157, 2:496.

finishes early at the end of chapter seven (….*fa-mā qāla lī fī šayʾin ḫālafata murādahū lima*

faʿalta. p.290).[788]

Chester Beatty AR 5277. The Chester Beatty Library. Dublin, Ireland. See description above.

Undated. The section on the knowledge of God (*maʿrifat allāh*) that Āstān-e Quds-e Rażāvī

56 places after chapter eight comes instead after chapter seven (ff.88b-97a). The small

section on God's attributes ommited in Şehid Ali 382 (al-ʿAǧalī pp.74-79) is present

(ff.14a-15b). A subsequent section on the attributes also appears in a different place (Şehid

Ali 382's f.23a (pp.79-82 al-ʿAǧalī) is swopped with Şehid Ali 382's ff.25b-26a (pp.98-

101 al-ʿAǧalī) at AR 5277's f.16a and f.23a). Arberry, Kahle, Al-Aǧalī. [789]

Feyzullah Efendi 2141. Süleymaniye. Istanbul, Turkey. Untitled. Dated 1091/1680. Third text

(ff.26b-80b.) in a collection (*muǧallad*) of four works: an anonymous exegesis of Quran 1

(see above); Ragib's *Analysis of the Two Creations* (see below); and Ragib's *Quranic*

Glossary (see above). The text of *On Creeds* is not mentioned on the title page whereas the

the other three works are. The text agrees with Şehid Ali 382 in the omission of the large

section on the knowledge of God, the ordering of the section on the attributes (Şehid Ali

382's f.23a), and the early conclusion, but the small section on the attributes omitted by

Şehid Ali 382 is present in accordance with Chester Beatty AR 5277 (ff.43a-43b).

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[788] Ragib, *On Creeds*, 10.

[789] Arberry and Lyons, *Chester Beatty*, 7:88. P. Kahle, *[Handlist, typed, annotated] Arabic Manuscripts in the Chester Beatty Library* (Dublin: Chester Beatty Library, unpublished). 5:4989-5280. Ragib, *On Creeds*, 10-11.

The Path to the Nobilities of the Revelation (*Kitāb aḏ-Ḏarīʿah ilā Makārim aš-Šarīʿah*)

Afyon Gedik 17308/1. Afyon Gedik Ahmet Paşa İl Halk Kütüphanesi. Milli Kütüphane-Ankara

    (Qurah Ḥiṣār in Arabic-language catalogues). Incorrectly titled Taḥqīq al-Bayān.[790]

Āstān-e Quds-e Rażāvī 6/21. Mashhad, Iran. Handlist, GALS.[791]

Atıf Efendi 2118. Süleymaniye. Istanbul, Turkey. K, GALS.

Ayasofya 2896. Süleymaniye. Istanbul, Turkey. K, GALS.

Ayasofya 2897. Süleymaniye. Istanbul, Turkey. K, GALS.

Ayasofya 2898. Süleymaniye. Istanbul, Turkey. K, GALS.

Ayasofya 1844. Süleymaniye. Istanbul, Turkey. K, GALS.

Ayasofya 4027. Süleymaniye. Istanbul, Turkey. K, GALS.

Ayasofya 4818. Süleymaniye. Istanbul, Turkey. K, GALS.

Berlin Oct. 3345. Berlin, Germany. Dated 592/1196. Al-ʿAğamī, GAL, GALS.[792]

British Museum 7016. London, United Kingdom. Stocks and Baker, GAL, GALS.[793]

British Museum 146 (Persian Translation). London, United Kingdom. GAL, GALS.

Carullah 2166. Süleymaniye. Istanbul, Turkey. K.

Chester Beatty AR 4408. The Chester Beatty Library. Dublin, Ireland. Arberry.[794]

Damad Ibrahim 768. Süleymaniye. Istanbul, Turkey. Undated. Anonymous notes on cover with

    biographical information about Ragib. As-Sārīsī, K.[795]

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[790] Turkish Ministry of Culture and Tourism, "http://www.yazmalar.gov.tr/".

[791] Fekrat and Murādī, *Fehrest*, 272.

[792] Ragib, *The Path to the Nobilities*, 45-46.

[793] Peter Stocks and Colin F. Baker, *Subject-guide to the Arabic manuscripts in the British Library* (London: British Library. Oriental and India Office Collections., 2001). 216.

[794] Arberry and Lyons, *Chester Beatty*, 5:128.

Dār al-Kutub al-Miṣrīyah 23435. Cairo, Egypt. Dated 1230/1815. Al-ʿAğamī.[796]

Dār al-Kutub al-Miṣrīyah 22994. Cairo, Egypt. Dated 1121/1709. Note on title page records

copying from manuscript dated 697/1298. Collation note dated 1143/1730. Fihrist, Al-

ʿAğamī.[797]

Fatih 3890. Süleymaniye. Istanbul, Turkey. K, GALS.

Feyzullah Efendi 1239. Süleymaniye. Istanbul, Turkey. K.

Feyzullah Efendi 1240. Süleymaniye. Istanbul, Turkey. K.

Köprülü 1299. Süleymaniye. Istanbul, Turkey. GAL.

Köprülü 1324. Süleymaniye. Istanbul, Turkey. GAL.

Köprülü 1371. Süleymaniye. Istanbul, Turkey. Sesen, GAL.[798]

Laleli 1744. Süleymaniye. Istanbul, Turkey. Dated 545/1150. Collated. GALS.

Manisa İl Halk Kütüphanesi 45 Hk 6214. Manisa, Turkey. Undated. Yazmalar.[799]

Nuruosmaniye 2383. Süleymaniye. Istanbul, Turkey. K.

Nuruosmaniye 4113. Süleymaniye. Istanbul, Turkey. Defter.[800]

Ragıb Paşa 1179. Süleymaniye. Istanbul, Turkey. ff.1b-91a. GAL.

Selimiye 630. Edirne, Turkey. K.

At-Taymūrīyah collection 13 #3. Undated. Al-Ḥalwağī.[801]

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[795] See note 94. as-Sārīsī, *ar-Rāġib*, 32.

[796] Ragib, *The Path to the Nobilities*, 45-46.

[797] Ibid. Fuʾād Sayyid, *Fihrist al-maḫṭūṭāt: našrah bi-al-maḫṭūṭāt -llatī iqtanathā ad-dār min sanat 1936-1955* (Cairo: Dār al-Kutub al-Miṣrīyah,[1961-1963] 1961-1963). 1:340.

[798] Şeşen, *Fihris Kūprīlū*, 2:98.

[799] Scanned images viewed at: Turkish Ministry of Culture and Tourism, "http://www.yazmalar.gov.tr/".

[800] Nuruosmaniye Kütüphanesi, *Nuruosmaniye Kütüphanesinde mahfuz kütüb-ü mevcudenin defteri* (Istanbul: Dersaadet, 1888). 235.

ʿUmūmī 12052. Kitābḫāne-ye ʿUmūmī Ḥażrat-e Naǧafī Marʿašī. Qum, Iran. Marʿašī, Mūsavī and Muttaqī.[802]

Vienna 1839. GAL.

Yahuda 2741. Princeton University Library, United States. Undated. Mach.[803]

Yahuda 3555. Princeton University Library, United States. Dated 584/1188 in Isfahan. Mach.[804]

Yeni Cami 937. Süleymaniye. Istanbul, Turkey. K.

Analysis of the Two Creations and Attainment of the Two Happinesses (*Tafṣīl an-Naš'atayn wa Taḥṣīl as-Saʿādatayn*)

Āṣafīyah 2/712. State Central Library, Hyderabad, India. GALS.

Āstān-e Quds-e Rażāvī. Mashhad, Iran. Fihrist.[805]

Āstān-e Quds-e Rażāvī. Dated 661/1263. Mashhad, Iran. Fihrist.[806]

Atıf Efendi 1267. Süleymaniye. Istanbul, Turkey. Yazmalar, K.[807]

Ayasofya 1711. Süleymaniye. Istanbul, Turkey. K, GALS.

Ayasofya 1862. Süleymaniye. Istanbul, Turkey. K.

Ayasofya 4027. Süleymaniye. Istanbul, Turkey. K, GAL.

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[801] ʿAbd al-Sattār ʿAbd al-Ḥaqq Ḥalwaǧī, *Arabic manuscripts in the Egyptian National Library (Dār al-Kutub al-Miṣriyyah): collections (maǧāmīʿ)* (London: Al-Furqan Islamic Heritage Foundation, 2008). 96-97.

[802] Maḥmūd Marʿašī, Mīr Maḥmūd Mūsavī, and Ḥusayn Muttaqī, *Rāhnamā-ye Nusḫehā-ye Ḫaṭṭī-ye Ketābḫāneh-ye Bozorg-e Ḥazerat-e Āyat Allāh al-ʿUẓmā Marʿašī Naǧafī*, 30 vols. (Qum: Ketābḫāneh-ye Bozorg-e Ḥazerat-e Āyat Allāh al-ʿUẓmā Marʿašī Naǧafī, 2003). vol.30.

[803] Mach, *Yahuda*, 169.

[804] Ibid.

[805] Afšār, Dānišpažūh, Ḥuǧǧatī, and Munzavī, *Fehrest*, 1:153.

[806] Ibid., 7:121.

[807] Turkish Ministry of Culture and Tourism, "http://www.yazmalar.gov.tr/".

Ayasofya 4818. Süleymaniye. Istanbul, Turkey. K.

British Museum. London, United Kingdom. Stocks and Baker.[808]

Carullah 3189. Süleymaniye. Istanbul, Turkey. K.

Çorum Hasan Paşa İl Halk Kütüphanesi 19 Hk 767. Çorum, Turkey. Dated 27 Šawwāl 735 /
    19 June 1335. Yazmalar.[809]

Dār al-Kutub al-Miṣrīyah 280. Cairo, Egypt. GALS.

Dār al-Kutub al-Miṣrīyah 555. Cairo, Egypt. GAL.

Esad Efendi 3640. Süleymaniye. Istanbul, Turkey. K.

Feyzullah Efendi 1235. Süleymaniye. Istanbul, Turkey. K.

Feyzullah Efendi 2141. Süleymaniye. Istanbul, Turkey. ff.17b-25b. Dated 1092/1681. K.

Al-Ḫālidīyah 1228. Jerusalem, Palestine/Israel. Dated 637/1240. Fihris.[810]

Köprülü 1371. Süleymaniye. Istanbul, Turkey. Dated 794/1392. Sesen, GAL.[811]

New Series 1313. Princeton University Library, United States. Dated 1046/1636. Mach and
    Ormsby.[812]

Nuruosmaniye 2394. Süleymaniye. Istanbul, Turkey. K.

Ragıb Paşa 1067. Süleymaniye. Istanbul, Turkey. K.

Ragıb Paşa 1179. Süleymaniye. Istanbul, Turkey. ff.91b-119b. K.

Ragıb Paşa 1483. Süleymaniye. Istanbul, Turkey. Dated 1068/1658. K.

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[808] Stocks and Baker, *Subject-guide*, 216.

[809] Scanned images viewed at: Turkish Ministry of Culture and Tourism, "http://www.yazmalar.gov.tr/".

[810] Naẓmī Ǧuʿbah, Walīd Ḫālidī, and Ḫaḍir Ibrāhīm Salāmah, *Fihris Maḫṭūṭāt al-Maktabah al-Ḫālidīyah al-Quds* (London: Al-Furqan Islamic Heritage Foundation, 2006).

[811] Şeşen, *Fihris Kūprīlū*, 2:98.

[812] Mach and Ormsby, *New Series*, 318.

Selimiye 630. Edirne, Turkey. K.

Şehid Ali 2394. Süleymaniye. Istanbul, Turkey. GALS.

ʿUmūmī. Kitābḫāne-ye ʿUmūmī Ḥażrat-e Nağafī Marʿašī. Qum, Iran. Undated. Earliest

    ownership mark from 1348/1929. Marʿašī and Ḥusaynī.[813]

Yahuda 3555. Princeton University Library, United States. Dated 584/1188 in Isfahan. Copied

    together with *The Path to the Nobilities* (see above). Mach.[814]

Littérateurs' Ripostes and Poets' and Eloquent Men's Rejoinders (*Muḥāḍarāt al-Udabāʾ wa-Muḥāwarāt aš-Šuʿarāʾ wa-l-Bulaġāʾ*)

Al-ʿAbbāsīyah. Barsa, Iraq. Mīr Lawḥī.[815]

Āstān-e Quds-e Rażāvī 38. Mashhad, Iran. Dated 1250/1834. Cf. Fihrist, Handlist, GALS.[816]

Āstān-e Quds-e Rażāvī 103. Mashhad, Iran. Incomplete. Dated 1115/1703. Cf. Fihrist, Handlist,

    GALS. Riedel, Mīr Lawḥī.[817]

Āstān-e Quds-e Rażāvī 4306. Mashhad, Iran.Undated, Persian abridged translation. Riedel.[818]

Āstān-e Quds-e Rażāvī 4990. Mashhad, Iran. Dated 1250/1834, abridgement. Riedel.[819]

Al-Awqāf. Baghdad, Iraq. Ṭalas.[820]

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[813] Marʿašī and Ḥusaynī, *Fehrest*, 8:275.

[814] Mach, *Yahuda*, 169.

[815] Mīr Lawḥī, *Rāġeb*, 189.

[816] Afšār, Dānišpažūh, Ḥuğğatī, and Munzavī, *Fehrest*, 5:402. Fekrat and Murādī, *Fehrest*, 499.

[817] Afšār, Dānišpažūh, Ḥuğğatī, and Munzavī, *Fehrest*, 5:402. Fekrat and Murādī, *Fehrest*, 499. Riedel, 2004 #123@32} Mīr Lawḥī, *Rāġeb*, 186-188.

[818] ———, *Rāġeb*, 182-185. Riedel, "Searching for the Islamic episteme," 32.

[819] ———, "Searching for the Islamic episteme," 32.

Atıf Efendi 2258. Süleymaniye. Istanbul, Turkey. K.

Ayasofya 4252. Süleymaniye, Istanbul, Turkey. GAL.

Ayasofya 4254. Süleymaniye, Istanbul, Turkey. K, Riedel, GAL.[821]

Ayasofya 4255. Süleymaniye, Istanbul, Turkey. K, Riedel, GAL.[822]

Ayasofya 4256. Süleymaniye, Istanbul, Turkey. K, Riedel, GAL.[823]

Ayasofya 4257. Süleymaniye, Istanbul, Turkey. K, Riedel, GAL.[824]

Ayasofya 4258. Süleymaniye, Istanbul, Turkey. K, Riedel, GAL.[825]

Bayezıd 5433. Istanbul, Turkey. K.

Berlin Petermann 105. Staatsbibliothek, Berlin, Germany. Undated, fragment. Ahlwardt, Riedel, GAL.[826]

Berlin Sprenger 1218. Staatsbibliothek, Berlin, Germany. Undated, fragment. Ahlwardt, Riedel, GAL.[827]

Berlin Wetzstein II 423. Staatsbibliothek, Berlin, Germany. Undated, fragment. Ahlwardt, Riedel, GAL.[828]

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[820] Ṭalas, "Nafāʾis al-Maḫṭūṭāt " 167.

[821] Riedel, "Searching for the Islamic episteme," 32.

[822] Ibid.

[823] Ibid.

[824] Ibid.

[825] Ibid.

[826] Ahlwardt, *Verzeichnis*, 7:328f. Riedel, "Searching for the Islamic episteme," 28-29.

[827] Ahlwardt, *Verzeichnis*, 7:328f. Riedel, "Searching for the Islamic episteme," 28-29.

[828] Ahlwardt, *Verzeichnis*, 7:328f. Riedel, "Searching for the Islamic episteme," 28-29.

Berlin Wetzstein II 424. Staatsbibliothek, Berlin, Germany. Dated 1049/1639. Fragment.

Ahlwardt, Riedel, GAL.[829]

Berlin Wetzstein II 1175. Staatsbibliothek, Berlin, Germany. Dated 596/1200, fragment.

Ahlwardt, Riedel, GAL.[830]

Biblioteca Ambrosiana 51. First half of work. Löfgren and Traini.[831]

Bibliothèque Nationale. Paris, France. Vajda.[832]

British Museum ADD 7305. London, United Kingdom. Dated 1169/1755. Colophon details

copying from manuscript dated 591/1195. Stocks and Baker, Murād, Riedel, GAL.[833]

British Museum ADD 18529. London, United Kingdom. Dated 14 Ṣafar 523 / 5 February 1129.

"Volume Four" (chapters 20-25 inclusive). Variant title f.3b: *Muḥāḍarāt al-Bulaġāʾ wa-*

Muḥāwarāt al-Udabāʾ wa-š-Šurʿarāʾ (*Eloquent Men's Replies and Littérateurs' and Poets'*

Ripostes). Variant author's name f.3b: *aš-Šayḫ Abū –l-Qāsim al-Ḥusayn b. Muḥammad b.*

Abī al-Faḍl ar-Rāġib. Deletions of sensitive material at f.29a (anecdote about the caliph

Muʿāwiyah 's (reg. 41/661-60/680) death being caused by a crucifix hung on him as a

talisman by a Christian doctor) and f.77b ("Shia" anecdote about the caliph ʿAlī (reg

35/656-40/661) having sex with the mother of the caliph ʿUmar b. al-Ḫaṭṭāb (reg. 13/634-

23/664)). This sub-sub-chapter on *Criticism of Extreme Shiism and Infatuation with the*

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[829] Ahlwardt, *Verzeichnis*, 7:328f. Riedel, "Searching for the Islamic episteme," 28-29.

[830] Ahlwardt, *Verzeichnis*, 7:328f. Riedel, "Searching for the Islamic episteme," 28-29.

[831] Oscar Löfgren and Renato Traini, *Catalogue of the Arabic manuscripts in the Biblioteca Ambrosiana* (Vicenza: N. Pozza, 1975). 1:154.

[832] Georges Vajda, *Index général des manuscrits arabes musulmans de la Bibliothèque nationale de Paris*, Publications de l'Institut de recherche et d'histoire des textes (Paris: Éditions du Centre national de la recherche scientifique, 1953). 492.

[833] Stocks and Baker, *Subject-guide*, 339-340. Ragib, *Littérateurs' Ripostes*, 1:23. Riedel, "Searching for the Islamic episteme," 28.

Companions of the Prophet (*Ḏamm al-Ġulūw wa-t-Tahāfut fī aṣ-Ṣaḥābah*) has extra text not found in Murād's edition, with further deletions.[834] Stocks and Baker, GAL, Mīr Lawḥī has detailed review based on Tehran photocopy.[835]

Dār al-Kutub al-Miṣrīyah 345. Cairo, Egypt. Abridgement by Ǧalāl ad-Dīn as-Suyūṭī. Dated 1036/1627. Fihrist, Riedel, GALS.[836]

Dār al-Kutub al-Miṣrīyah. Cairo, Egypt. Dated 1124/1712. Riedel, Fihrist.[837]

Dār al-Kutub al-Miṣrīyah. Cairo, Egypt. Dated 1271/1855. Fihrist, Riedel, Murād.[838]

Esad Efendi 2897. Süleymaniye. Istanbul, Turkey. K.

Fatih 4064. Süleymaniye. Istanbul, Turkey. K.

Fazıl Ahmed Paşa 1371. Süleymaniye, Istanbul, Turkey. Dated 793/ 1391. Sesen, Riedel, GAL.[839]

Fazıl Ahmed Paşa 1372. Süleymaniye, Istanbul, Turkey. Undated. Riedel, GAL.[840]

Fazıl Ahmed Paşa 1373. Süleymaniye, Istanbul, Turkey. Undated. Riedel, GAL.[841]

Fazıl Ahmed Paşa 1374. Süleymaniye, Istanbul, Turkey. Undated, abridgement. Riedel.[842]

Fazıl Ahmed Paşa 1375. Süleymaniye, Istanbul, Turkey. Dated 916/1510. Riedel, GAL.[843]

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[834] Deleted text is at: Ragib, *Littérateurs' Ripostes*, 4:279 lines 2-6, 4:283 line 9.

[835] Stocks and Baker, *Subject-guide*, 339-340. Mīr Lawḥī, *Rāġeb*, 177-182.

[836] Dār al-Kutub al-Miṣrīyah, *Fihrist al-Kutub al-ʿArabīyah al-Mawǧūdah bi-d-Dār li-Ġāyat Āḫir Šahr Māyū 1926* (Cairo: Maṭbaʿat Dār al-Kutub al-Miṣrīyah, 1927). 3:345. Riedel, "Searching for the Islamic episteme," 32.

[837] ———, "Searching for the Islamic episteme," 32. Dār al-Kutub al-Miṣrīyah, *Fihrist* 4:319.

[838] Ragib, *Littérateurs' Ripostes*, 1:23. Riedel, "Searching for the Islamic episteme," 32. Dār al-Kutub al-Miṣrīyah, *Fihrist* 4:319.

[839] Şeşen, *Fihris Kūprīlū*, 2:98. Riedel, "Searching for the Islamic episteme," 32.

[840] ———, "Searching for the Islamic episteme," 32.

[841] Ibid.

[842] Ibid.

Fazıl Ahmed Paşa 1376. Süleymaniye, Istanbul, Turkey. Undated. Riedel, GAL.[844]

Fazıl Ahmed Paşa 1377. Süleymaniye, Istanbul, Turkey. Undated. Riedel, GAL.[845]

Fazıl Ahmed Paşa 1378. Süleymaniye, Istanbul, Turkey. Dated 579/1183. Sesen, Riedel, GAL.[846]

Fazıl Ahmed Paşa 1379. Süleymaniye, Istanbul, Turkey. Dated 800/1398. Riedel.[847]

Fazıl Ahmed Paşa 1380. Süleymaniye, Istanbul, Turkey. Dated 790/1388. Riedel.[848]

Feyzullah Efendi 1752-1754. Süleymaniye. Istanbul, Turkey. K.

Al-Ḫālidīyah 1259. Jerusalem, Palestine/Israel. Fihris.[849]

Halle 116. Halle, Germany. Tuʿmah.[850]

Hamidiye 1188. Süleymaniye. Istanbul, Turkey. K.

Hamidiye 1189. Süleymaniye. Istanbul, Turkey. K.

Kastamonu 2022. İl Halk Kütüphanesi, Kastamonu, Turkey. K.

Laleli 1920. Süleymaniye. Istanbul, Turkey. K.

Leiden 178. University Library, Leiden, Netherlands. Undated, excerpt. Riedel, GAL.[851]

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[843] Ibid.

[844] Ibid.

[845] Ibid.

[846] Şeşen, *Fihris Kūprīlū*, 2:98. Riedel, "Searching for the Islamic episteme," 32.

[847] ———, "Searching for the Islamic episteme," 32.

[848] Ibid.

[849] Ǧuʿbah, Ḫālidī, and Salāmah, *Fihris*.

[850] ʿAdnān Tuʿmah, *Fihrist al-Maḫṭūṭāt al-ʿArabīah al-Maḥfūẓah fī Maktabāt al-Ǧamʿīyah al-Istišrāqīyah al-Almānīyah bi-Madīnat Hālah* (Najaf: Al-Qaḍāʾ Printing Press, 1977). 157.

[851] Riedel, "Searching for the Islamic episteme," 29.

Michigan University Library Sulaiman Purchase Collection. *Muḥāḍarāt al-udabā' wa-muḥāwarāt al-shuʿarā' wa-al-bulaghā'*. Former shelfmark: Mich. Isl. Ms. temp. no. 164. United States.[852]

Nuruosmaniye 4231. Süleymaniye. Istanbul, Turkey. K, Defter.[853]

Selim Ağa 981. Süleymaniye, Istanbul, Turkey. K.

Selim Ağa 987. Süleymaniye, Istanbul, Turkey. Undated. K, Riedel, GALS.[854]

Tabriz National Library. Tabriz, Iran. Dated 1276/1860. Riedel, Mīr Lawḥī.[855]

Tehran ʿAlī Muṭahharī 3265. Tehran, Iran. Dated 1070/1660. Riedel.[856]

Tehran Maǧlis 308. Tehran, Iran.Undated, Persian abridged translation. Riedel.[857]

Tehran ʿUmūmī 144. Tehran, Iran. Dated 1285/1868. Riedel.[858]

Tehran University 1884. Tehran, Iran. Incomplete. Dated 27 Šawwāl 1068 / 28 July 1658. Mīr Lawḥī, cf. Riedel.[859]

Tehran University 2492. Tehran, Iran. Fragment. Riedel.[860]

Tehran University 4503. Tehran, Iran.Undated, Persian abridged translation. Riedel.[861]

Kitābḫāne-ye ʿUmūmī Ḥażrat-e Naǧafī Marʿašī. Qum, Iran. Dated 1285/1868. Mīr Lawḥī.[862]

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[852] Available online at: http://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/006834155.

[853] Nuruosmaniye Kütüphanesi, *Defteri*, 243.

[854] Riedel, "Searching for the Islamic episteme," 32.

[855] Ibid. Mīr Lawḥī, *Rāġeb*, 188-189.

[856] ———, *Rāġeb*, 182-185. Riedel, "Searching for the Islamic episteme," 32.

[857] Mīr Lawḥī, *Rāġeb*, 182-185. Riedel, "Searching for the Islamic episteme," 32.

[858] Mīr Lawḥī, *Rāġeb*, 182-185. Riedel, "Searching for the Islamic episteme," 32.

[859] Mīr Lawḥī, *Rāġeb*, 182-185. Riedel, "Searching for the Islamic episteme," 32.

[860] ———, "Searching for the Islamic episteme," 32.

[861] Mīr Lawḥī, *Rāġeb*, 182-185. Riedel, "Searching for the Islamic episteme," 32.

Vazīrī Library. Yazd, Iran.[863]

Vienna A.F. 144. National Library, Vienna, Austria. Undated. Riedel, GAL.[864]

Vienna A.F. 145. National Library, Vienna, Austria. Undated. Riedel, GAL.[865]

Vienna N.F. 51. National Library, Vienna, Austria. Undated. Riedel, GAL.[866]

Yazd 14,700. Wazīrī Library, Yazd, Iran. Fragment. Riedel.[867]

Yeni Cami 1004. Süleymaniye. Istanbul, Turkey. Riedel, K.[868]

Aẓ-Ẓāhirīyah 3176. Damascus, Syria. Murād.[869]

Aẓ-Ẓāhirīyah 86, 5. Damascus, Syria. Riedel, GALS.[870]

The Confluence of Eloquence (*Mağmaʿ al-Balāġah*)

Ahmed III 2390. Topkapı Palace. Istanbul, Turkey. Dated 521/1127. K, as-Sārīsī.[871]

Ahmed III 2500. Topkapı Palace. Istanbul, Turkey. Dated 624/1256. K, as-Sārīsī.[872]

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[862] Mīr Lawḥī, *Rāġeb*, 189.

[863] Ibid.

[864] Riedel, "Searching for the Islamic episteme," 29.

[865] Ibid.

[866] Ibid.

[867] Ibid., 32.

[868] Ibid.

[869] Ragib, *Littérateurs' Ripostes*, 1:23.

[870] Riedel, "Searching for the Islamic episteme," 29 note 9. Catalogued by Brockelmann as "Dam. ʿUm.". See Reidel and 1881 and 1882 in: Geoffrey Roper, *World Survey of Islamic Manuscripts* (London: Al-Furqan Islamic Heritage Foundation / Brill, 1991). 3:194-195.

[871] Ragib, *Confluence of Eloquence*, 1:10-16.

[872] Ibid., 1:6-10.

Ragib on Innovative Figures of Speech (*Kitāb min Kalām ar-Rāġib fī-l-Badīʿ*)

Landberg 165. The Landberg Collection, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale

 University, New Haven, United States. Nemoy.[873]

Abridgement of 'The Reform of Speech' by Ibn as-Sikkīt (*Muḫtaṣar Iṣlāḥ al-Manṭiq li-Ibn as-Sikkīt*)

At-Taymūrīyah 137 Luġah. Dated 552/1157. Cairo, Egypt. Photocopy in Umm al-Qurā

 University, Mecca, Saudi Arabia at #316. Fihris, Dāwūdī, Ibrāhīm.[874]

On the Difference Between the Words 'One' and 'Absolute One' (*Risālah fī Ḏikr al-Wāḥid wa-l-Aḥad*)

Esad Efendi 3654. Süleymaniye. Istanbul, Turkey. Collection dated 14 Šawwāl 1243 / 29 April

 1828. Three folios. As-Sārīsī.[875]

Atıf Efendi 1267. Süleymaniye. Istanbul, Turkey. Two folios. Yazmalar, K.[876]

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[873] Nemoy, *Arabic manuscripts*, 41.

[874] *Fihris al-Muṣawwarāt al-Mīkrūfīlmīyah al-Mawǧūdah bi-Maktabāt al-Mīkrūfīlm bi-Markaz al-Buḥūṯ ... al-Luġah al-ʿArabīyah*, vol. 1 (Mecca: Markaz al-Buḥūṯ al-ʿIlmī wa Iḥyāʾ at-Turāṯ al-Islāmī. Ǧāmiʿat Umm al-Qurā, 1985). 301. Ragib, *Quranic Glossary*, 11. Ibrāhīm, *Ibn as-Sikkīt*, 165-169.

[875] Ragib, "One and Absolute One," 20-21.

[876] Turkish Ministry of Culture and Tourism, "http://www.yazmalar.gov.tr/".

On the Correct Ways to Mix with People (*Risālah fī Ādāb al-Iḫtilāṭ bi-n-Nās*)

Esad Efendi 3654. Süleymaniye. Istanbul, Turkey. Collection dated 14 Šawwāl 1243 / 29 April 1828. As-Sārīsī.[877]

Āstān-e Quds-e Rażāvī. Mashhad, Iran. Has the title on f.1a: *Aḥwāl al-Mawaddāt wa-Murāʿāt al-Maḥabbāt* (*The Circumstances of Friendships and the Observances of Loves*). Attributed to *Abū al-Qāsim* in incipit. Dated 989/1581. Mīr Lawḥī.[878]

Atıf Efendi 1267. Süleymaniye. Istanbul, Turkey. Thirteen folios. Yazmalar, K.[879]

On Human Virtue Arising from the Disciplines of Knowledge (*Risālah anna Faḍīlat al-Insān bi-l-ʿUlūm*)

Esad Efendi 3654. Süleymaniye. Istanbul, Turkey. Collection dated 14 Šawwāl 1243 / 29 April 1828. 19 pages. As-Sārīsī.[880]

Atıf Efendi 1267. Süleymaniye. Istanbul, Turkey. Six folios. Yazmalar, K.[881]

On the Ordering of Intellectual Disciplines and of Worldly Actions (*Risālah fī Marātib al-ʿUlūm wa-l-Aʿmāl ad-Dunyawīyah*)

Esad Efendi 3654. Süleymaniye. Istanbul, Turkey. Dated 14 Šawwāl 1243 / 29 April 1828. As-Sārīsī.[882]

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[877] Ragib, "On the Correct Ways to Mix With People," 55-58.

[878] Mīr Lawḥī, *Rāġeb*, 241-248 (with 5 plates).

[879] Turkish Ministry of Culture and Tourism, "http://www.yazmalar.gov.tr/".

[880] Ragib, "On Human Virtue Arising from the Disciplines of Knowledge," 151-152.

[881] Turkish Ministry of Culture and Tourism, "http://www.yazmalar.gov.tr/".

Atıf Efendi 1267. Süleymaniye. Istanbul, Turkey. Four folios. Yazmalar, K.[883]

The Correct Way in Chess (*Adab aš-Šaṭranǧ*)

Kazan, Russia. Menzel, Brockelmann, GALS.[884]

On Knowledge of the Soul and On Invocation of God's Name (*Risālah fī-Maʿrifat an-Nafs, Risālah fī-ḏ-Ḏikr*)

Hamidiye 1447. Süleymaniye. Istanbul, Turkey. The works attributed to Ragib are numbered 052 and 053 in this collection of 145 works on a wide variety of philosophical and historical subjects. 052 and 053 appear to be in the margin between f.93 (#050) and f.106a (#057).

Šarḥ li-Duʿāʾ aṣ-Ṣabāḥ al-mawsūm bi-Miftāḥ an-Naǧāḥ (*The Key to Success: Commentary on the Morning Personal Prayer*)

Bağdatlı Vehbe 983. Süleymaniye. Istanbul, Turkey. ff.11b-24a. Second text in an undated collection of Sufi texts comprising: an anonymous work on the names of God (Ḫawāṣṣ Manāfiʿ Asmāʾ [sic.] al-Ḥusnā wa-hiya Tisʿah wa-Tisʿīna Isman) at ff.1b-10a; Ḥizb at-Taḍarruʿ wa-l-Ibtihāl li-l-Quṭb ar-Raḥmānī wa-l-Fard aṣ-Ṣamadānī (The Party of Humility and Supplication to the Pole of Mercy and the Eternal Individual) attributed to ʿAbd al-Qādir al-Kīlānī (al-Ǧīlānī, 470/1078–561/1166) at ff.25a-31b; and Ward Yawm al-Aḥad / Ward Yawm al-Iṯnayn attributed

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[882] Ragib, "On the Ordering of Intellectual Disciplines and of Worldly Actions," 201-208.

[883] Turkish Ministry of Culture and Tourism, "http://www.yazmalar.gov.tr/".

[884] Menzel, "Das heutige Russland," 94. Brockelmann, *Al-Rāghib*.

to Muḥyī ad-Dīn Ibn ʿArabī (560/1165-638/1240) at ff.31b-42b. The attribution of the The Key to Success comes on text on f.11a that ends in a ruled upturned triangle:

> aš-Šayḫ al-Imām Abū al-Qāsim al-Ḥusayn b. Muḥammad al-Mufaḍḍal, known as ar-Rāġib al-Iṣfahānī, commented on this noble section [of the morning prayer] attributed to ʿAlī, may God exalt him and be pleased with him…[followed by a brief review of some of Ragib's works].

The manuscript as a whole appears to be quite late Ottoman (red rule-borders, scholar's nasḫ bookhand), and while the text of the prayer itself corresponds to recent editions,[885] the text of the commentary titled The Key to Success is not reminiscent of Ragib's other work. As-Sārīsī.[886]

Šarḥ Kalām Rasūl Allāh fī Ḥaqq ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib (Commentary on the Prophet's Words Concerning the Right of Ali)

Ragıb Paşa 1179 ≠ Ragib (?). *Süleymaniye. Istanbul, Turkey. ff.119b-124a. There is no evidence that this text at the end of a copy of The Path to the Nobilities and Analysis of the Two Creations (see above) is Ragib's. It begins with the phrase: "this is a section (faṣl) containing the words of the Prophet…". K.*

False Attributions (in addition to those detailed above)

Aḫlāq ar-Rāġib (Ragib's Ethics)

Ahlwardt suggested that the unknown author (fl. 460/1068) of this work may have been Ragib. The chapter headings he records do not tally with any of Ragib's known works.[887]

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[885] For example see: Hādī b. Mahdī Sabzavārī, *Šarḥ Duʿāʾ aṣ-Ṣabāḥ* (Beirut: Dār al-Maḥaǧǧah al-Bayḍāʾ / Dār ar-Rasūl al-Akram, 1997).

[886] as-Sārīsī, *ar-Rāġib*, 235. Ragib, *Letters*, 11.

***Aṭbāq aḏ-Ḏahab* (*Trays of Gold*)**

Kaḥḥalah lists this manuscript in ʿĀrif Ḥikmet, Mecca, Saudi Arabia, but Dānišpažūh lists it as a commentary on az-Zamaḫšarī's (467/1075-538/1144) Aṭbāq aḏ-Ḏahab.[888]

Al-Qalāʾid wa-l-Fawāʾid* (*Poems and Homilies*).

Listed by Kaḥḥālah in ʿĀrif Ḥikmet, Mecca, Saudi Arabia, this is in fact by Abū al-Ḥusayn Muḥammad b. al-Ḥusayn al-Ahwāzī (d. 330/941) with a false additional attribution to Ragib on its front endpaper. The work has been published by Dār Ibn Ḥazm under al-Ahwāzī's name, edited by Iḥsān Ḏunān aṯ-Ṯāmirī, in Beirut in 2006. The Mecca manuscript is dated 907/1501.[889]

***Ṣaqīl al-Fahm* (*Burnished Understanding*)**

Kâtib Čelebi notes that this may be Ragib's Littérateurs' Ripostes and this is supported by Ragib's use of the phrase ṣaqīl al-fahm in the introduction to Littérateurs' Ripostes.[890]

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[887] Ahlwardt, *Verzeichnis*, 5:5.

[888] Kaḥḥalah, *al-Muntaḫab*, 106. Muḥammad Taqī Dānešpažūh, *Nusḫe-hā-ye Ḫaṭṭī [serial, continuation of Našrīyah-ye Ketābḫānah-ye Markazī-ye Dānešgāhī-ye Tehrān Darbārah-ye Nusḫahā-ye Ḫaṭṭī (Bulletin de la Bibliotheque Centrale de l'Universite de Tehran concernant les manuscrits orientaux)]*, ed. Muḥammad Taqī Dānešpažūh (Tehran: Tehran University, 1965-). 5:496. Cf. as-Sārīsī, "Ḥawla Taḥqīq."

[889] Kaḥḥālah, *al-Muntaḫab*, 42. I am grateful to Shoaib Ahmed for helping me obtain a copy of this manuscript.

[890] Čelebi, *Kašf aẓ-Ẓunūn*, 4:114. Ragib, *Littérateurs' Ripostes*, 1:3.

كِتابٌ مِنْ كَلامِ الرَّاغِبِ في البَدِيع [891]

[f.3b] تَقاسِيمُ الكَلام

الكَلامُ ضَرْبَينِ مُهْمَلٌ وَمُسْتَعْمَلٌ فَالمُهْمَلُ لا حاجَةَ إلى ذِكْرِهِ وَالمُسْتَعْمَلُ على ضَرْبَينِ ضَرْبٌ يُفِيدُ إبانَةَ

عَيْنٍ مِن عَيْنٍ مِن مَقامٍ [كذا] مَقامَ الإشارَةِ [خ: ضَرْبٌ يُفِيدُ إبانَةَ عَيْنٍ وَتَقُومُ مَقامَ الإشارَةِ] [892] وَذْلِكَ

الأَعْلامُ وَضَرْبٌ وُضِعَ لِيُفِيدَ على طَرِيقِ الاشْتِراكِ وَذْلِكَ قِسْمَينِ قِسْمٌ يَقَعُ على المُخْتَلِفاتِ وَالأَضْدادِ

كَقَوْلِكَ في الأَسْماءِ لَوْنٌ وَجَوْهَرٌ وَفي الأَفْعالِ فَعَلَ وَصَنَعَ وَقِسْمٌ يَتَناوَلُ مَخْصُوصاً كَفَرَسٍ وَحِمارٍ في

الأَسْماءِ وَخَرَجَ وَضَرَبَ في الأَفْعال

وَالأَلْفاظُ المُفِيدَةُ على أَضْرُبٍ مِنْها ما وُضِعَ لِمَعْنَى واحِدٍ مُخْتَصٍّ بِهِ وَمِنْها ما وُضِعَ لِمَعْنَيَينِ مُخْتَلِفَينِ وَمِنْها

ما وُضِعَ لِضِدَّينِ فَالأَوَّلُ لا خِلافَ فِيهِ وَالثَّانِّي وَالثَّالِثُ لا خِلافَ أَيْضاً أَنَّهُ يَجُوزُ في لُغَتَينِ وَاخْتَلَفُوا في

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[891] أنظر Appendix One للتفصيل

[892] في الهامش مع رمز "خ"

جَوازِهِ [ص: إذا كان] فِي لُغَةٍ وَاحِدَةٍ وَمَن أَبَى جَوازَ ذٰلِكَ تَطَلَّبَ لِكلِّ لَفْظٍ مِن ذٰلِكَ وَجْهانِ [f.4a]

ثُمَّ اخْتَلَفُوا هَل يُصَحُّ أَنْ يُرادَ بِاللَّفْظِ الواحِدِ مَعْنيانِ مُخْتَلِفانِ فَأَبَى ذٰلِكَ كَثِيرٌ مِن الأُدَباءِ وَالفُقَهاءِ

وَجَوَّزَهُ بَعْضُهُم وَهُوَ الصَّحِيح

وَعلى ذٰلِكَ قَوْلُ الشَّاعِرِ

وَماءٍ آجِنٍ الجَمّاتِ قَفْرٍ   تَعَقَّمَ فِي جَوانِبِهِ السِّباعُ

وَالماءُ قَدْ يُطْلَقُ على مَكانِهِ وَقَدْ أُرِيدَ هُوَ وَمَكانُهُ فِي البَيتِ لِأَنَّ الآجِنَ مِن صِفَةِ الماءِ وَقَفْرٌ مِن صِفَةِ المَكانِ وَقَدْ وُصِفَ بالوَصْفَينِ وَلَيْسَ هٰذا مَوْضِعُ الاسْتِقْصاءِ فِيه [بِحاشِية: الاعْتِقامُ الاحْتِفارُ فِي جَوانِب البِيِر [كذا] وَيُقالُ هُوَ التَّرَدُّدُ وَهُوَ الأَصَحّ]

[المُساوَةُ]

وَمِن هٰذا البابِ [بابُ الاستِعارةِ] المُساوَةُ وَهُوَ أَنْ يَكونَ اللَفْظُ مُساوِيّاً لِلمَعنى لا زايِدَ [كذا] عليه

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893 في الهامش مع رمز "ص"

ولا ناقِص عنه كَما قال بعضُهم في وَصفٍ بليغٍ كانَتْ أَلفاظُهُ قَوالِبُ لِمعنِيها ونَحو

سَتُبْدِي لَكَ الأَيامُ ما كُنْتَ جاهِلاً   ويأْتِيكَ بِالأَخْبارِ مَن لَم تُزَوِّدْ

ونَحو

وَأَوَّلُ راضٍ سُنَّةً مَن يَسِيرُها

وكَقولِ زُهَير

سَئِمْتُ [كذا][894] تَكالِيفَ الحياةِ ومَن يَعِشْ   ثَمانِينَ عَاماً لا أَبا لَكَ يَسْأَمِ

فإِنَّ العُلَماءُ ارْتَضوهُ وَاسْتَحْسَنُوهُ إِذْ قَدْ ذُكِرَ أَنَّهُ سُئِمَ تَكالِيفَ الحياةِ لا الحياةِ إِذْ كانَتِ الحياةُ لا تُمَلُّ

وَفُضِّلَ على بَيْتِ لَبِيدٍ حَيْثُ يقولُ

وَلَقَدْ سُئِمْتُ مِن الحياةِ وَطُولَها   وَسُؤالِ هٰذا الناسِ كَيْفَ لَبِيدُ

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[894] والصَّواب سُئِمْتُ

الَبَسطُ

في الكَلامِ لَهُ مَواضِعُ يَختَصُّ بها وَهُوَ أَنْ يَكونَ في مَوقِفٍ يُحتاج فِيه إلى تَفهِيمِ العامةِ [ص: وَفِيهُم]

القَرِيبُ والبَعِيدُ والذَّكِيُّ والبَطِيءُ الفَهِمَ أَوْ كان اللَفظُ مُشتَرِكاً بَين مَعنِيِين حَقِيقَتَين أَوْ حَقِيقَةٍ ومَجازٍ أَوْ

عامٍ وخاصٍّ أَوْ لِصِدْقِ العِنايةِ بمورِدِ الخَبَرِ فَيَحتاجُ إلى الإشْباع

تَفْسِيرُ الرَّاغِب [896]

[Carullah 84: f.24a]

فَإِنْ قِيلَ كَيفَ وَجْهُ العَطفِ في ذٰلِكَ وَقَدْ قالَ في الأَوَّلِ مَثَلُكُمْ كَمَثَلِ الَّذِي اسْتَوْقَدَ ناراً وَلا يَلِيقُ أَنْ

يُقالَ بَعدَهُ كَصِيبٍ قِيلَ قَدْ أُجِيبَ عَنْ ذٰلك بِأَنَّهُ أُرِيدَ أَوْ كَأَهْلِ صِيبٍ مِنْ السَّماءِ وَقِيلَ إِنَّ ذٰلِكَ عَطْفُ

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[895] في الهامش مع رمز "خ"

[896] أنظر Appendix One للتفصيل

عَلَى المَعْنَى وَذٰلِكَ أَنَّ التَّشْبِيهَ تَارَةً يُؤْتَى ⁸⁹⁷ بِهِ مُطَابِقاً لِلْمُشَبَّهِ فِي اللَّفْظِ وَتَارَةً يُؤْتَى ⁸⁹⁸ بِهِ عَلَى مَا يَقْتَضِيهِ

المَعْنَى دُونَ اللَّفْظِ عَلَى ذٰلِكَ قَوْلُهُ تَعَالَى ۝ مَثَلُ مَا يُنْفِقُونَ فِي هٰذِهِ الحَيوةِ كَمَثَلِ رِيحٍ فِيهَا صَرٌّ أَصَابَتْ

حَرْثِ قَوْمٍ ظَلَمُوا أَنْفُسَهُمْ ۝ وَمَعْنَاهُ كَحَرْثِ قَوْمٍ ظَلَمُوا أَنْفُسَهُمْ أَصَابَتْهُ رِيحٌ فَزرعِيٌّ ⁸⁹⁹ فِيهِ المَعْنَى دُونَ

اللَّفْظِ وَعَلَى ذٰلِكَ قَوْلُ الشَّاعِرِ

فَلِابْنَةِ حِطَانَ بْنِ عَوْفٍ مَنَازِلٌ   كَمَا رَقَّشَ العُنْوانَ فِي الرِّقِّ كَاتِبُ

وَتَقْدِيرُهُ كَعُنْوانٍ رَقَّشَهُ الكَاتِبُ وَهٰذا النَّوْعُ مِنْ التَّشْبِيهِ يُقَالُ لَهُ التَّشْبِيهُ المُلَفَّفُ

[Carullah 84: f.26a]

وَشَرْحُ هٰذِهِ الآيَةِ لَا بُدَّ أَنْ نُبَيِّنَ فِيهِ كَيْفَ كَانَ تَعْلِيمُ اللهِ تَعَالَى آدَمَ الأَسْمَاءَ وَهَلْ فِي ذٰلِكَ دَلَالَةٌ عَلَى

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⁸⁹⁷ نوي :Carullah 84

⁸⁹⁸ نوي :Carullah 84

⁸⁹⁹ يمكنه أراد أن يبتدئ بِ"فَراعٍ"

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أَنَّ اللُّغَاتَ تَوْقِيفٌ أَوِ اصْطِلاحٌ وَأَنَّهُ هَلْ عَلَّمَهُ الأَسْمَاءَ دُونَ المَعَانِي أَوْ عَلَّمَهُ إِيَّاهُما جَمِيعاً ... فَيَقُولُ [900]

وَبِاللهِ التَّوْفِيقِ إِنَّ النَّاسَ اخْتَلَفُوا فِي اللُّغَاتِ فَذَهَبَ بَعْضُ المُتَكَلِّمِينَ إِلَى أَنَّ أَوَائِلَها [كَذا] اصْطِلاحٌ

وَالبَاقِي يَصِحُّ أَنْ يَكُونَ تَوْقِيفاً وَاسْتَدَلَّ عَلَى ذَلِكَ بِأَنَّهُ لا سَبِيلَ إِلَى مَعْرِفَةِ مُرَادِ اللهِ إِلَّا بِالخِطَابِ وَلا

يَصِحُّ أَنْ تَعْلَمَهُ ضَرُورَةً لِأَنَّ العِلْمَ بِمُرَادِهِ فَرْعٌ عَلَى العِلْمِ بِذَاتِهِ فَلا يَصِحُّ أَنْ يَكُونَ العِلْمُ بِمُرَادِهِ ضَرُورَةً

وَالعِلْمُ بِذَاتِهِ مُكْتَسِباً لِأَنَّ ذَلِكَ يُؤَدِّي إِلَى أَنْ يَكُونِ العِلْمُ الخَفِيِّ ضَرُورِيّاً وَالجَلِيُّ مُكْتَسِباً وِذَلِكَ فَاسِدٌ

هَذا مَا قَالَهُ وَالصَّحِيحُ إِنْ شَاءَ اللهُ مَا ذَهَبَ إِلَيْهِ الجُمْهُورُ أَنَّهُ تَوْقِيفٌ [901] وَقَبْلَ الدَّلالَةِ عَلَى المَسْئَلَةِ نُبَيِّنُ

أَنَّ تَعْلِيمَ اللهِ تَعَالَى عِبَادَهُ عَلَى أَيِّ وَجْهٍ يَكُونُ فَذَلِكَ يُسَهِّلُ الكَلامَ فِي المَسْئَلَةِ وَالقَوْلَ فِي ذَلِكَ أَنَّ اللهَ

تَعَالَى قَدْ أَشَارَ إِلَى ذَلِكَ بِقَوْلِهِ ۝وَمَا كَانَ لِبَشَرٍ أَنْ يُكَلِّمَهُ اللَّهُ إِلَّا وَحْيًا أَوْ مِنْ وَرَاءِ حِجَابٍ أَوْ يُرْسِلَ

رَسُولًا فَيُوحِيَ بِإِذْنِهِ مَا يَشَاءُ۝ [902] فَذَكَرَ أَنَّ مُكَالَمَتَهُ تَعَالَى البَشَرَ عَلَى أَحَدِ هَذِهِ الأَوْجُهِ الثَّلاثَةِ أَشْرَفُها

مَا كَانَ بِإِرْسَالِ رَسُولٍ يَرَى ذَاتَهُ وَيَسْمَعُ كَلامَهُ كَحَالِ النَّبِيِّ مَعَ جِبْرِيلَ عَلَيْهِ السَّلامُ وَالثَّانِيُّ مَا كَانَ بِإِلْقَاءِ

كَلامٍ فِي السَّمْعِ مِنْ غَيْرِ رُؤْيَةٍ كَحَالِ مُوسَى عَلَيْهِ السَّلامُ فِي ابْتِدَاءِ الرِّسَالَةِ وَالثَّالِثُ مَا كَانَ يُوحِي

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[900] فَنَقُولُ Ayasofya 212:

[901] تَوْقِيفِيٌّ Ayasofya 212:

[902] سورة الشورى آية 51

وَالوَحيُ هاهُنا مَخْصُوصٌ بِالإِلْقَاءِ فِي الرَّوْعِ وَالإِلْهَامِ وَالتَّسْخِيرِ وَالمَنَامَاتُ فَتَعْلِيمُ اللهِ تَعَالَى آدَمَ الأَسْمَاءَ

عَلَى أَحَدِ هَذِهِ الوُجُوهِ وَمُحالٌ أَنْ يَكُونَ الاصْطِلاحُ عَلَى الأَلْفاظِ مُتَقَدِّماً عَلَى التَّعْلِيمِ فَإِنَّ الاصْطِلاحَ

لا بُدَّ لَهُ مِنْ كَلامٍ يَتَواطَؤُونَ [كذا] عَلَيْهِ وَذَلِكَ يُؤَدِّي إِلَى أَنَّ لا يَكُونَ اصْطِلاحٌ وَلا لُغَةٌ فَإِنْ قِيلَ فَما

تَنْكَرُونَ أَنْ تُواضِعُوا إِشاراتٌ وَتَصْوِيتٌ فَإِنَّ الأَخْرَسَ [f.26b] يَقْدِرُ عَلَى ذَلِكَ وَلَهُ مَخارِجُ الحُرُوفِ

لأَنَّا نَجِدُ الَّذِينَ لا يَتَكَلَّمُونَ يَفْهَمُونَ وَيُفْهَمُونَ وَلا لُغَةَ لَهُمْ قِيلَ الإِشاراتُ يُفْهَمُ عَنْها بِالاسْتِدْلالِ كَسايِرِ

[كذا] الاسْتِدْلالاتِ الَّتِي لَوْ تَوَهَّمْنا الكَلامَ مُرْتَفَعاً لَصَحَّ حُصُولُهُ وَلَيْسَ لِلأَخْرَسِ إِلَّا الاسْتِدْلالُ فَقَطْ

وَلا قُدْرَةَ لَهُ عَلَى أَلْفاظٍ تُؤَلِّفُها وَإِنَّما صَوْتُهُ كَصَوتِ الطِّفْلِ الَّذِي لَمْ يَتَلَقَّن الأَلْفاظَ وَاللُّغَةُ إِنَّما يَكُونُ لُغَةً

بِحُصُولِ تَرْكِيبِ المُفْرَداتِ الثَّلاثِ وَلَوْ كانَ إِلَى ذَلِكَ سَبِيلٌ مِنْ غَيْرِ تَعْلِيمٍ لَكانَ مِنْ شَرْطِ البُكْمِ أَنْ

يَتَواضَعُوا فِيما بَيْنَهُمْ كَلاماً لِأَنَّ آفَةَ البُكْمِ مِنَ السَّمْعِ فَإِنَّما عَجَزَ عَنِ الكَلامِ لِعَجْزِهِ عَنِ التَّلَقُّنِ بِالسَّمْعِ فَثَبَتَ

أَنَّ ابْتِداءَ تَعْلِيمِ الكَلامِ لا يَكُونُ إِلَّا مِنْ مُعَلِّمٍ وَذَلِكَ قَدْ كانَ مِنَ اللهِ تَعَالَى لِآدَمَ بِأَخْذِهِ الوُجُوهِ المُتَقَدِّمَةِ إِنْ

قِيلَ كَيْفَ عَلَّمَهُ الأَسامِي كُلَّها وَقَدْ عَلِمْنا أَنَّهُ ما مِنْ زَمَنٍ إِلَّا وَبَنُوها يَصِفُونَ أَسامِي لِمَعانٍ وَأَعْيانٍ إِمَّا

مُخْتَرَعَةً وَإِمَّا مَنْقُولَةً إِلَيْها عَنْ غَيْرِها قِيلَ قَدْ قالَ بَعْضُ النَّاسِ إِنَّ كُلَّ ذَلِكَ بِجُزْياتِها [كذا] عَلَّمَها اللهُ آدَمَ

وَإِنْ أُظْهِرَ فِي بَعْضِ الأَزْمِنَةِ مِنْ بَعْضِ أَهْلِهِ وَالصَّحِيحُ أَنَّ العِلْمَ فِي الحَقِيقَةِ يَتَعَلَّقُ بِمَعْرِفَةِ الأُصُولِ

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المُشْتَمِلَةِ عَلَى الفُرُوعِ وَالمَعَانِي الكُلِّيَّةِ المُنْطَوِيَّةِ عَلَى الأَجْزَاءِ كَمَعْرِفَةِ جَوْهَرِ الإِنْسَانِ وَالفَرَسِ وَالقَوَانِينَ

الَّتِي تُعْرَفُ بِهَا حَقِيقَةُ الشَّيْءِ كَأُصُولِ الضَّرْبِ فِي الحِسَابِ وَأَحْوَالِ الأَبْعَادِ وَالمَقَادِيرِ وَالهَنْدَسَةِ [903]

وَالأُصُولِ المَبْنِيّ [كذا] عَلَيْهَا المَسَايِلُ [كذا] الكَثِيرَةُ فِي الفِقْهِ وَالكَلَامِ وَالنَّحْوِ فَأَمَّا مَعْرِفَةُ الجُزْئِيَاتِ [كذا]

مُتَعَرِّيَةً عَنْ الأُصُولِ فَلَيْسَ بِعِلْمٍ وَلَا يُقَالُ العَارِفُ [904] بِهَا عَالِمٌ عَلَى الإِطْلَاقِ وَإِنَّمَا هُوَ فِي مَعْرِفَتِهَا مُحَاكٍ

مُحَاكَاةَ البَبْغَاءِ لِلأَلْفَاظِ وَإِذَا كَانَ كَذَلِكَ فَتَعْلِيمُ اللهِ آدَمَ الأَسْمَاءَ كُلَّهَا إِعْلَامُهُ القَوَانِينَ وَالأُصُولَ المُشْتَمِلَةَ

عَلَى الجُزْئِيَاتِ [كذا] وَالفُرُوعِ وَقَدْ عُلِمَ أَنَّ تَعْلِيمَ الكُلِّيَاتِ أَعْظَمُ فِي الأُعْجُوبَةِ وَأَشْبَهُ بِالأُمُورِ الإِلٰهِيَّةِ مِنْ

تَعْلِيمِنَا الصَّبِيّ الحَرْفَ بَعْدَ الحَرْفِ وَقَوْلُهُ الأَسْمَاءَ كُلَّهَا أَرَادَ بِهِ الأَلْفَاظَ وَالمَعَانِي مُفْرَدَاتِهَا وَمُرَكَّبَاتِهَا وَحَقَائِقِهَا

[كذا] وَذَوَاتَ الأَشْيَاءِ فِي أَنْفُسِهَا وَبَيَانُ ذَلِكَ أَنَّ الاِسْمَ يُسْتَعْمَلُ عَلَى ضَرْبَيْنِ أَحَدُهُمَا بِحَسَبِ الوَضْعِ

الأَوَّلِ وَذَلِكَ يُقَالُ لِلأَنْوَاعِ الثَّلَاثَةِ الَّتِي هِيَ المُخْبَرُ عَنْهُ وَالخَبَرُ وَالرَّابِطُ بَيْنَهُمَا وَهِيَ المُعْتَبَرُ عَنْهَا بِالاِسْمِ

وَالفِعْلِ وَالحَرْفِ وَهَذَا هُوَ المُرَادُ هَاهُنَا فَإِنَّهُ تَعَالَى لَمْ يَرِدْ بِقَوْلِهِ وَعَلَّمَ آدَمَ الأَسْمَاءَ كُلَّهَا تَعْلِيمُهُ رَجُلاً وَفَرَساً

دُونَ ذَهَبَ وَخَرَجَ [f.27a] وَمِنْ وَعَنْ وَلَا يَعْرِفُ الإِنْسَانُ الاِسْمَ فَيَكُونَ عَارِفاً مُسَمَّاهُ إِذَا عُرِضَ عَلَيْهِ

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[903] فِي الهَنْدَسَةِ: Ayasofya 212

[904] لِلعَارِفِ: Ayasofya 212

الآنَ[905] يَعْرِفُ المُسَمَّى أَلَا تَرَى أَنَّ لَوْ عَلِمْنا أَسامِي بِلُغَةٍ مَحْبُولَةٍ[906] وَلَمْ نَعْرِفْ صُورَةَ ما لَهُ تِلْكَ الأَسْماءِ

لَمْ نَكُنْ عارِفاً بِها إذا شاهَدْناها وَكُنَّا عارِفِينَ بِأَصْواتٍ مُجَرَّدَةٍ فَثَبَتَ أَنَّ مَعْرِفَةَ الاسْمِ لا يَحْصُلُ إِلَّا بِمَعْرِفَةِ

المُسَمَّى في نَفْسِهِ وَحُصُولِ مَعْرِفَتِهِ في الضَّمِيرِ ثُمَّ المَعْلُوماتُ قَدْ يَكُونُ جَواهِرَ وَأَعْراضاً مِنْ كَمِّيّاتٍ

وَكَيْفِيّاتٍ وَإِضافاتٍ وَسائِرِ [كذا] ذلِكَ مِنَ الأَعْراضِ وَيُجْعَلُ لِلشَّيْءِ الواحِدِ أَسامِي بِحَسَبِ هذِهِ

النَّظَراتِ فَلا بُدَّ أَنْ يَكُونَ الإِنْسانُ عارِفاً بِهذِهِ المَعانِي مُجْتَمِعَةً وَمُفْتَرِقَةً حَتَّى يَكُونَ عارِفاً بِالأَسْماءِ الَّتِي

تُجْعَلُ لَها[907] بِحَسَبِها مِثالُ ذلِكَ إِنَّهُ يُقالُ لِلشَّخْصِ الواحِدِ فُلانٌ اعْتِباراً بِلَقَبِهِ وَرَجُلٌ اعْتِباراً بِابْنِهِ وَأَخٌ

اعْتِباراً بِابْنِهِ وَأَخٌ اعْتِباراً بِمَنْ ضَمَّهُ وَإِيّاهُ نَسَبَ[908] وَقُرَشِيٌّ وَأَصْبَهانِيٌّ[909] اعْتِباراً بِقَبِيلَتِهِ وَبَلَدِهِ إِلَى غَيْرِ

ذلِكَ مِنَ الأَسْماءِ كُلِّها مُتَضَمِّنَةٌ كَما ذَكَرْناهُ[910] ...

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[905] إِلَّا :Ayasofya 212

[906] بِالهِنْدِيَةِ أَوْ بِلُغَةٍ مَجْهُولَةٍ :Ayasofya 212

[907] تُجْعَلُ ذلِكَ لَها :Ayasofya 212

[908] وَرَجُلٌ اعْتِباراً بِالآلَةِ المُوَلِّدَةِ وَابْنٌ اعْتِباراً بِوالِدِهِ وَأَبٌ اعْتِباراً بِوُلْدِهِ وَأَخٌ اعْتِباراً بِمَنْ ضَمَّهُ وَإِيّاهُ نَسَبَ :Ayasofya 212

[909] مَكِّيٌّ :Ayasofya 212

[910] إِلَى غَيْرِ ذلِكَ مِنَ الأَسْماءِ الَّتِي يَكْثُرُ تَعْدادُها فَإِذاً حَقِيقَةُ قَوْلِهِ وَعَلَّمَ آدَمَ الأَسْماءَ كُلَّها مُتَضَمِّنَةٌ لِما ذَكَرْناهُ :Ayasofya 212

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