THE ART OF DEBATE IN ISLAM: TEXTUAL ANALYSIS AND TRANSLATION OF ṬAŞKÖPRÜZADE’S ĀDĀB AL-BAḤTH WA AL-MUNĀẒARAH

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Abstract
This article presents an analysis of a short treatise entitled Ādāb al-Baḥth wa al-Munāẓarah (The art of discussion and disputation) by the celebrated Ottoman scholar Abū al-Khayr Ḥasan al-Dīn Aḥmad ibn Muṣṭafā ibn Khalīl Ṭāshkubrīzādah or Ṭaşköprüzade (d. 968 AH/ 1561 CE). An overview of the nomenclature and a brief introduction about the author and his work will be presented along with an annotated English translation of the text in order to highlight Ṭaşköprüzade’s contribution to this nearly forgotten discipline.

Keywords: Ādāb al-Baḥth wa al-Munāẓarah; The art of discussion and disputation; Ṭaşköprüzade; English translation.

Khulasah
Artikel ini memberikan huraian mengenai sebuah risalah pendek bertajuk Ādāb al-Baḥth wa al-Munāẓarah (Seni perbincangan dan perdebatan) yang dikerang oleh seorang ulama Turki Uthmani bernama Abū al-Khayr Ḥasan al-Dīn Aḥmad ibn Muṣṭafā ibn Khalīl Ṭaşköprüzade atau Ṭaşköprüzade (wafat 968 Hijri/ 1561 Masihi). Gambaran keseluruhan mengenai tatanama dan pengenalan ringkas mengenai pengarang dan karyanya akan disajikan bersama dengan terjemahan teks bahasa Inggeris yang diberi
Introduction
Disputation (διάλεξις), the formalized procedure of scholarly inquiry and debate, is one of the hallmarks of intellectual life in pre-modern times. In the Islamic intellectual tradition it is known as jadal and munāẓarah. Muslim philosophers, theologians and jurists used it both for polemical as well as didactic purposes. Since ancient times, disputation has been recognized as one of important academic tools, the other being conversation (διάλογος) and lecture (ἀκρόασις). Both in the medieval Muslim world as well as in Latin Europe, disputation practice emerged in connection with both the intrareligious and interreligious debates involving theologians (e.g. the Mu’tazilites versus Ash’arites), jurists (e.g. the Shāfi’ites contra Ḥanbalites), linguists (e.g. al-Kisā’ī against Sībawayh), and Muslim thinkers vis-à-vis Christian apologetics.

This article presents an analysis of a short treatise entitled Ādāb al-Baḥth wa al-Munāẓarah (The art of discussion and disputation’) by the celebrated Ottoman scholar Abu al-Khayr ʿIṣām al-Dīn Aḥmad ibn Muṣṭafā ibn Khalīl Ṭāshkubrīzādah or Ṭaşköprüzāde (d. 968 AH/1561 CE). An overview of the nomenclature and a brief

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1 From the Middle Ages to the modern era, disputation was the usual method for clarifying theological and scientific issues. The Leipzig disputation between Martin Luther and Johannes Eck in 1519 at Pleißenburg is a famous case in point. For a fuller account, see Andrea von Hülsen-Esch, Gelehrte im Bild: Repräsentation, Darstellung und Wahrnehmung einer sozialen (Goettingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2006), 320ff.
introduction about the author and his work will be presented along with an annotated English translation of the text in order to highlight Taşköprüzade’s contribution to this nearly forgotten discipline.

**Overview of the Term Ādāb**

Although in the contemporary usage *adab* has been narrowly understood either as etiquette or as *belles-lettres* in the sense of literature in general, the study of literary productions or philological scholarship (hence the translation of the now obsolete ‘Faculty of Letters’ into *Kulliyat al-Ādāb*), the history of the term is a rather complex issue, mirroring the social, political, and intellectual changes in Muslim civilization across centuries.²

Etymologically, the Arabic word *adab* denotes habit, norm of conduct, and custom with the twofold connotation of being inherited from one’s ancestors and being praiseworthy, has come to mean discipline of the mind, culture, good upbringing, civility, and courtesy in contrast to uncouthness, barbarism, and bad manners associated with the Bedouins.

With the coming of Islam, however, apart from the ethical and social meaning, the word *adab* acquired an intellectual meaning, signifying the sum of knowledge

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which makes a person literate, educated, and civilized, comprising grammar, poetry, oratory, and history. During the Abbasid times, the term *adīb* and its plural *udabāʾ* was applied to someone not only cultivated in Arabic poetry and prose but also acquainted with foreign (Greek, Persian, Indian) cultures, an Arab equivalent to the term ‘humanist’ in post-Renaissance Europe or ‘liberal arts’ in the modern age.

Thus, it has been suggested that *adab* could be an accurate rendering of *paideia*, the classical Greek word referring to ‘a process of moral and intellectual education designed to produce an *adīb*, a gentleman-scholar’. ³

Perhaps in response to the secularizing trends of his times al-Māwardī wrote *kitāb Adab al-Dunyā wa al-Dīn* (The Guidebook for this World and the Next)⁴ which elucidates the superiority of reason (*‘aql*) over passion (*hawāʾ*), knowledge over ignorance, and the various ways in which the intellectual, spiritual, and social behavior is to be practiced in order to attain happiness in this life and the next.

In the course of time, the term *adab* took on the specific meaning of the formal qualifications indispensable to a particular profession, such as reflected in Ibn Qutaybah’s *Adab al-Kātib* (Manual for Secretary).⁵

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al-Khaṣṣāf’s *Adab al-Qāḍī* (‘Handbook for Judges’), and Ibn al-Khaṭīb’s *Adab al-Wizārah* (‘Precept for the Vizier’). In all this, *adab* refers to the type of knowledge, behavior, attitude, and skills that someone with a professional job is expected to have in order to perform his or her task effectively.

An important insight into the meaning of *adab* is offered by Syed M. Naquib al-Attas in his essay on the concept of education in Islam. According to him, the concept couched in the word *adab* represents the Muslim ideal of the virtuous and harmonious life of a person who truly knows the proper place of him/herself in relation to God and other fellow creatures, and who, as a result, behaves properly and acts justly towards others and towards oneself. A person of *adab* will be able to deal with various levels of realities in the right and proper manner because *adab* inculcates in him a sense of order and discipline in the mind which will naturally be reflected in all personal, social, and cultural dealings and expressions.

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6 In this phrase, the term *adab* has been rendered differently by different scholars, as ‘duties’ (Ch. Hamilton), as ‘moralities’ (F.H. Ruxton), ‘meurs judiciaires’ (E. Tyan), and ‘manual’ (Khalid Masud). There exist several works on this subject bearing similar title, e.g. that of al-Māwardī (d. 450/1058), Ibn al-Qāṣṣ al-Ṭabarī (335/946), al-Baghawī (d. 510/1117). Among the issues discussed are the qualifications, appointment, and removal of a *qāḍī*; court procedure; the relationship between a *qāḍī* and a ruler; and, particularly, the manners and etiquette of judgship.


Al-Attas defines *adab* as “the recognition and acknowledgement of the reality that knowledge and being are ordered hierarchically according to their various grades and degrees of rank, and of one’s proper place in relation to that reality and to one’s physical, intellectual and spiritual capacities and potentials.”\(^9\) This is the sense conveyed in such works as Muḥammad ibn Saḥnūn’s *Ādāb al-Mu‘allimin* (Codes of Ethics for Teachers), Abū Najīb al-Suhrawardī’s *Ādāb al-Murīdīn* (Rules of Conduct for Novices), and Abū Manṣūr al-Tha‘ālabī’s *Ādāb al-Mulūk* (The Proper Conduct of Kings)\(^10\) which purport not merely to inform or to convince, but rather to instruct, to admonish, and to induce.

To borrow Wan Daud’s words who expressed it in concrete terms; “If one displays sincere humility, love, respect, care, charity, etc. to one’s parent, elders and children, neighbours and leaders, it shows that one knows one’s proper place in relation to them”\(^11\) and that is *adab.* Indeed, in Islamic legal literature, the term *adab* is often used in two senses. First, it refers to actions that are necessary and praiseworthy, though not obligatory. In contrast to *aḥkām,* i.e. legal norms that are typically formulated in the terms of precepts and prohibitions (the violation of which entails punishment), ādāb stand for

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actions that are considered morally good and yet remain optional. Another sense of adab has to do a type of behavior that becomes a habit or skill because, as Qāḍī Nāgarī says, “unless it is a skill (malakah) it cannot be called adab.”

**Origin and Development of the Art**

The Islamic ‘art of discussion and disputation’ did not spring into existence *ex nihilo*. One could discern traces of Aristotelian logic, Islamic theological dialectic and jurisprudential eristic in its basic principles and technique. The phrase ādāb al-baḥth wa al-munāẓarah was apparently invented by Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn Ashraf al-Ḥusaynī al-Samarqandī (d. after 690/1291) who made it the title of his pioneering treatise, although Ibn Khaldūn later credited Rukn al-Dīn al-Āmidī (d.

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With taking this step already a few generations earlier.\textsuperscript{15}

That the science of ādāb al-baḥth wa al-munāẓarah has its roots in the earlier sciences of logic (manṭiq) and dialectic (jadal) the elements of which had been appropriated and incorporated by medieval Muslim scholars into the sciences of Kalām and Uṣūl al-Fiqh as the methodological tools for the analysis and evaluation of arguments is quite evident.

At the turn of the fourth/tenth century, the falāsifah have advanced the science of dialectic and have benefited a great deal from the logical works of Aristotle. On the other hand, the early fuqahā‘ appeared to have independently developed their own eristic based on what was called the science of khilāf, which literally means disagreement and opposition and may be compared to the scholastic sic et non approach of juxtaposing apparently contradictory views before trying to reconcile them or resolve these contradictions.

Works on khilāf have survived from as early as the second/eight century,\textsuperscript{16} while literature on theological and legal dialectic already flourished since the beginning of the fifth/tenth century, as attested by Abū Ishāq al-Shīrāzī’s al-Ma‘ūnah fī al-Jadal (The Aid on Eristic)\textsuperscript{17} and


\textsuperscript{17} Edited by ʿAlī ibn ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz al-ʿUmayraynī (Kuwait: Jam‘iyyah Iḥyāʾ al-Turāth, 1407/1987).
al-Mulakhkhas fī al-Jadal (The Summary on Eristic), Abū al-Maʿālī al-Juwaynī’s al-Kāfiyah fī al-Jadal (The Sufficient on Eristic) and Abū al-Wafāʾ ibn ‘Aqīl’s Kitāb al-Jadal ‘alā Ṭarīqah al-Fuqahāʾ (The Book of Eristic according to the Method of Jurists). Similarly, legal disputation (munāẓarah) was already a separate and distinct form and function of teaching at least as early as the fourth/tenth century. According to Makdisi, it was through disputation that excellence (riʿāsah) in a field of knowledge was established.

Thus, historically speaking, one could say that ādāb al-baḥth wa al-munāẓarah was not yet recognized as an independent scholarly discipline that is neither similar to jurisprudential eristic nor reducible to logic until the seventh/thirteenth century. Al-Samarqandī’s work not only initiated a new discipline but also became the standard for dozens of treatises, commentaries and glosses that appeared after him. It took some time before the nascent science received new impetus from the Ashʿarite theologian ‘Aḍud al-Dīn al-Ījī (d. 756/1355) who wrote a short treatise on the subject.

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18 Still in manuscript, a copy of which is preserved in the library collection of Grand Mosque (al-Jāmiʿ al-Kabīr) of Sanaa, MS no. 64 (uṣūl al-fiqh).
19 Edited by Fawqiyyah Ḥusayn Maḥmūd (Cairo: Muṣṭafā al-Bābī al-Ḥalabī, 1399/1979).
22 One of the extant commentaries on this text is written by the eminent Shafiʿite scholar of Egypt, Zakariyyā al-Anṣārī (d. 926/1520) under the title Fāṭḥ al-Wahhāb bi Sharḥ al-Ādāb (The Opening from the All-Giving – A Commentary on the Art [of Discussion and Debate]), edited by ‘Arafah ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Nādī (Kuwait: Dār al-Ḍiyāʾ, 2014).
23 Titled Matn Ādāb al-Baḥth which has been reprinted numerous times apud the collection Majmūʿ min muhimmāt al-mutūn al-mustaʿmalah
The ādāb al-baḥth wa al-munāẓarah underwent a substantial development in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, thanks to the contribution of Ottoman scholars who produced glosses and composed new textbooks. Concerning the importance of this new discipline Meḥmed Sāçaqlīzādeh says that someone who has no share in this science will hardly be able to follow high-level discussions in logic, theology, and jurisprudence.

Interest in the new field among the Ottoman scholarly circles was evident in new works both in the form of glosses and super glosses on ‘Aḍud al-Dīn al-Ījī’s treatise that were penned by Mullā Ḥanafi Tabrīzī (fl. 926/1520), ‘Abd al-Raḥmān Āmiddī (d. 1066/1656), Aḥmed Ḥācī-Ōmezādeh (fl. 1106/1695), Es’ad Yānyavī (d. 1141/1729), Meḥmed Kefevī (d. 1167/1754), Ismāʿīl Gelenbevī (d. 1205/1791), and many more.

This flowering period in Ottoman intellectual history also saw the publication of three important new textbooks, i.e. Risālah fī Ādāb al-Baḥth wa al-Munāẓarah (Epistle on the Art of Discussion and Disputation), al-Ḥusayniyyah (The Ḥusaynī Epistle) and Taqrīr al-Qawānīn al-Mutadāwilah fī ‘Ilm al-Munāẓarah (Fixing the Circulating Canons on the Science of Disputation), written by Tāshköprüzāde, Ḥuseyn Adanavī, and Meḥmed Sāçaqlīzādeh respectively. The latter also composed a shorter tract which came to be known as al-Waladiyyah

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24 See Mehmet Karabela, “The Development of Dialectic and Argumentation Theory in Post-Classical Islamic Intellectual History” (PhD diss., McGill University, 2010), 139-140.

(The Filial Epistle) that elicited numerous commentaries from later scholars.26

The Author and the Text
Of the little information we have about Ṭāşköprüzāde most comes from his own works, all of which are written in Arabic. Though he did not leave an autobiography, he does refer in his writings to several significant episodes in his life including the subjects he taught at various colleges (medrese). Needless to say, these references are precious and help us to place him firmly in the intellectual and historical context of his times.

Abū al-Khayr ‘Īsām al-Dīn Aḥmad ibn Mūṣṭafā ibn Khalīl was born at Bursa on 14 Rabī‘ al-Awwal 901 AH/2 December 1495 into a family of Ottoman Turkish scholars who come from Tašköprü (stone bridge), a town and district of Kastamonu province in the Black Sea region of Turkey. He received his early education from his father, then studied at Ankara, Bursa, and Istanbul under celebrated scholars and became a professor in Istanbul, Skopje, and Edirne, where he taught at the medrese of Bayezid II till 951/1544. He served as Judge (Qāḍī) of Bursa for two years before being reinstated as Sahn professor. In 958/1551 he was appointed Qāḍī of Istanbul, but had to resign in 961/1554 because of failing eyesight. He devoted the following years to dictating his works. He died in Istanbul on 30 Rajab 968/13 April 1561.27

One of the most prolific authors of his times, Ṭāşköprüzāde wrote more than nineteen theological and encyclopaedic works in Arabic. His celebrated biographical encyclopedia of Ottoman scholars up to the reign of Süleyman, *al-Shaqa‘īq al-Nu‘māniyyah fī ‘Ulamā’ al-Dawlat al-‘Uthmāniyyah* (The Red Anemones on the Scholars of the Ottoman Dynasty), 28 which he dictated down to 965/1558, became a major source for Ḥājjī Khalīfah (or Kātib Çelebi)’s *Kashf al-Zunūn ‘an Asāmī al-Kutub wa al-Funūn* (Removing Conjectures concerning the Names of Books and Branches of Learning).

Another encyclopedic work, *Miftāḥ al-Sa‘ādah wa Miṣbāḥ al-Siyādah* (The Key to Happiness and the Lamp of Mastery) 29 has also been widely acclaimed. Other works of importance include *al-Inṣāf fī Mushājarat al-Aslāf* (Moderation on the Disagreement of Previous Scholars), 30 and *al-Ma‘ālim fī ‘Ilm al-Kalām* (Signposts on the Science of Kalām). 31


28 Edited by Ahmet Suphi Furat and Mecdî Mehmed (Istanbul, 1985).
30 Edited by Muḥammad Sa‘īd Shehātah (Cairo: Maktabat Kulliyyat al-Ādāb, 1428/2007).
31 Still in manuscript form preserved in Istanbul.

While it lays no claim to originality, taking freely as it seems many elements from earlier works on the same subject, Ṭāşköprüzāde’s treatise, as noted by El-Rouayheb, remains a useful handbook that covers the same ground as al-Samarqandi’s treatise but nevertheless “made less demands on the students, largely because it left out the rather abstruse examples given by al-Samarqandi of debates in theology, philosophy, and law to which the dialectical principles he outlined could be applied.”

For the following translation I have used the recent edition by Ḥāyif al-Nabhān who relied on various manuscripts and provided several different versions of the text. Though I have not been able to make a systematic study of the manuscript copies, given the constraints of a deadline, I have consulted other printed editions as well to make better sense of certain puzzling passages. This may not be the first complete translation of the work into English, as there have been several studies by other scholars some of which I have consulted and benefited from, though I have not always agreed with them.

In general, I have aimed to prepare a translation that is accurate, clear, and readable. Given the state of the text,

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however, this has not always been a straightforward task. I have inserted some key terms in transliteration for the sake of clarity wherever it seemed necessary, especially since I have not always translated such terms consistently but interpreted them within their immediate context; for example, technical terms such as manʿ (prohibition, prevention, obstruction, preclusion, interdiction, etc.) for which there is no obvious English equivalent proved especially troublesome.

I have resisted the temptation to alter or improve upon the text, even when it seemed cryptic or clumsy. At the same time, I have tried to do justice to the original, which is often both straightforward and even eloquent. The annotations to the text are intended to clarify obscure or recondite matters wherever possible, as well as to provide essential information for readers not familiar with the subject.

**Synoptic Analysis of the Content**

Tāşköprüzāde opens his text with laudatory phrase to God and salutation to the Prophet and his family and companions. First, he gives a definition of disputation and he explains its procedure, describing the task of the questioner (who plays the role of opponent by attacking the claimant’s argument and by raising objections to it in order to rebut it) and the task of the claimant (who plays the role of defender trying to reply to objection by presenting a counterargument).

The task of the questioner is threefold: first, to contradict; second, to refute; and third, to oppose. The task of the claimant will vary, depending on the kind of strategy used by the questioner. He may defend the validity of the premise either by setting forth another argument or by reminding the questioner of his fallacious reasoning. Otherwise, he may refuse to accept the questioner’s testimony by invoking another proof. Alternatively, he may even turn the table on the questioner.
by doubting the validity of his argument. Finally, Ṭāşköprüzāde explains the purpose of disputation and the rules of conduct to be observed by its participants.

To go into details, the questioner’s objection to a thesis or premise of an argument may be in one of the following three ways: [i] contradicting the claimant by denying one of the premises in the argument; [ii] rebutting the claimant by finding fault with his argument as a whole, and this by showing either that its conclusion leads to absurdity, such as circular reasoning (dawr) or infinite regress (tasalsul bi lā nihāyah) or by showing that the same proof can be used to demonstrate a proposition known to be false; [iii] opposing the claimant by presenting an argument for a thesis that is incompatible with his position.

The first strategy, munāqaḍah (i.e. objecting to a premise or thesis), would be legitimate only if the premise is neither evidently true nor conceded by both parties. The questioner may adduce corroboration or support (shāhid or sanad) for his objection or he may not. In either case, it is incumbent on the claimant to respond. The questioner should, however, take care not to go beyond adducing support to preemptively trying to prove that a premise is false, for this would be tantamount to changing his role (turning him into a claimant) and constitute usurpation (ghaṣb) of his opponent’s role.

In response to such strategy, the claimant should either advance an argument for the premise or remind the questioner that the premise is evidently true or has been conceded by the questioner himself. If the questioner adduces corroboration or support for his objection to the premise, the claimant should attempt to refute the questioner’s corroboration only in a case in which it is the only possible ground for rejecting a premise. Otherwise, refuting the given corroboration leads nowhere because the questioner may legitimately respond that the
corroboration reason he had given for doubting the premise is only one of several possible reasons, and the claimant would still be bound to establish the premise.

This is an important and subtle point that is related to the principle that if a premise used by the claimant is not evident or conceded, then he may legitimately be asked to supply a proof of it. The fact that the questioner may have given a specific reason for doubting the premise does not change this basic obligation to supply a proof. The claimant should therefore not attempt to refute the given reason unless he can show that it is the only possible reason for rejecting the premise. To put the point in a language closer to that of the dialecticians: the corroboration (sanad) offered by the questioner should be refuted only if it can be shown to be logically equivalent (musāwī) to the denial of the original claim.

Consider the following example from philosophy in which the claimant puts forth this argument: All quiddities are one. No things which differ in particulars are one. Therefore, no things which differ in their particulars are quiddities. The questioner can object by applying this same proof to accidents and arguing as follows: All accidents are one. No things which differ in their particulars are accidents. Therefore, no things which differ in their particulars are accidents. But since this conclusion contradicts what is known about accidents, namely, that they do differ in their particulars, therefore one of the premises of the proof must be false. And since the truth of the major premise is admitted by both claimant and questioner, the minor premise (i.e. that no things which differ in their particulars are one) must be false. Further, since the claimant’s proof also contains this premise, his proof is thereby shown to be defective.

As for the second strategy, naqd (i.e. objecting that the argument is flawed and fails to establish the truth of the conclusion), whereby the questioner tries to
demonstrate the flaw of the claimant’s proof and the non-sequitur of its conclusion, he should in this case adduce corroboration in support of the objection, lest the opponent charge him with sheer obstinacy (mukābarah). The corroboration might be that the same argument could be made for a conclusion that the claimant himself does not accept, or that the argument is circular or leads to absurdity.

To overcome this second strategy, the claimant may either supply a different proof or refute the corroboration (i.e. the questioner’s reason for rejecting the claimant’s proof). Refuting the corroboration is in this context legitimate because it shifts the burden of proof: the questioner is left in position of having to offer another corroboration reason for rejecting the claimant’s proof because an unsupported rejection of the proffered proof is deemed obstinacy. Refuting the corroboration of the questioner may take the form of accepting the further consequences of the argument (in modern parlance, “biting the bullet”) or showing that the circularity or absurdity pointed out by the questioner is only apparent.

With regard to the third strategy, muʿāraḍah (i.e. conceding that the claimant has an argument for the claim but proceeding to construct another argument for the opposite claim), whereby the questioner supplies an argument for a conclusion that contradicts that of the claimant, the questioner assumes the role of claimant and tries to adduce premises that entail the alternative conclusion. The recommended counter-strategy to be used is interchanging the role so that the original questioner becomes a claimant arguing for a conclusion that contradicts the thesis of the original claimant, and the claimant in turn becomes a questioner who can object to the counter-argument using one of the three mentioned strategies.
The final section of the text outlines the standard rules of disputation. According to Taşköprüüzade, a scholarly debate must end with either the claimant forcing the questioner to concede (this is called ilzām) or the questioner refuting the claimant (this is called ifḥām). These are held to be the only possible outcomes of the debate, as the failure of the claimant to prove his point would in itself constitute a refutation by the questioner. Since the burden of proof rests on the claimant, his failure to prove his case in the debate will amount to his defeat.

Translation of the Text

I praise You, O God, the one who answers every seeker, and I pay respect to Your Prophet, the one who was sent [as a messenger to humanity] with the strongest proof, as well as to his family and companions who established the link [to God] with the greatest means, as long as an exchange of views exists between the respondent and the questioner.

Now, this is a treatise which I composed briefly on the science of ādāb.\(^ {35} \)

\(^ {35} \)That is, ādāb al-baḥth wa al-munāzarah. It is not uncommon in Arabic to abbreviate the phrase in the genitive construction (lafz murakkab idāfī) by omitting the second noun (muḍāf ilayh) and by turning the first noun (muḍāf) into definite noun (ma’rifah) by
You should know that disputation is a thoughtful investigation of an issue by two opposing sides concerning a relationship between two things in order to discover the truth. Each side has specific tasks, and all debate has codes of conduct.\textsuperscript{37}

The task of the questioner\textsuperscript{38} consists of three steps: [i] to contradict, [ii] to refute, and [iii] to oppose. For, he may intercept either the premise of an argument, the argument itself, or the

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adding \textit{alif} and \textit{lām} (؟), e.g. al-Fakhr (i.e. Fakhr al-Dīn), \textit{al-Ṣaḥiḥayn} (i.e. \textit{Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī} and \textit{Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim}).

\textsuperscript{36} So as to make the text neither too short nor too long.

\textsuperscript{37} I.e. a set of rules outlining the norms, proper manner or ethical standards for the participants.

\textsuperscript{38} Arabic: \textit{al-sā’il}, i.e. the one who raises objections in order to undermine the argument and disprove its validity.
position being argued.

In the first situation, whereby he tries to prevent the opponent [from holding a position] with or without appealing to authority, the strategy is called munāqaḍah (i.e. showing the opponent’s self-contradiction, inconsistency or logical absurdity). Another kind of the same strategy is called ḥall [literally: to dissolve, to disentangle, to disintegrate], which is pointing out or pinning down the error [in the opponent’s reasoning]. With regard to preventing the claimant [from maintaining his thesis] by presenting another [i.e.

39 An example of this strategy is given by Sāçaqlīzāde in his al-Risālah al-Waladiyyah, in which the philosopher is positioned as the claimant giving the following argument for the eternity of the world: All things that are effects of an eternal being are eternal. The world is an effect of an eternal being. Therefore, the world is eternal. In response to this, the questioner can apply the same proof to refute the thesis by arguing as follows: All things that are effects of an eternal being are eternal. Daily events are effects of an eternal being. Therefore, daily events are eternal. This conclusion is obviously false, and since the truth of the minor premise is not in dispute, the major premise, which is the same in both proofs, must be false.
new] argument,\textsuperscript{40} it is considered usurpation (ghaṣb)\textsuperscript{41} i.e. of his opponent’s role) —a step that is unheard of among established scholars, as it could lead to unruly clash (khabt). Yet he may occasionally resort to that strategy once the argument for the premise has been put forth.

In the second situation, whereby he tries to block [the claimant] by calling a witness this strategy is called \textit{naqḍ} [i.e. literally: demolition, destruction, refutation]. But to simply reject the claimant’s claim with no testimonial evidence will constitute arrogance (\textit{mukābarah}) that is also unheard of universally.\textsuperscript{42}

\textsuperscript{40} That is to say, the questioner should not go beyond adducing support to preemptively trying to prove that a premise is false.

\textsuperscript{41} So that he will not take over the opponent’s role as claimant upon whom the burden of proof rests.

\textsuperscript{42} In his kitāb \textit{al-Ta’rīfāt} (‘Book of Definitions’) al-Jurjānī defines \textit{mukābarah} as engaging oneself in a scientific debate in order to silence the opponent rather than showing the truth (\textit{al-munāza’ah fī al-mas’alāh al-‘ilmīyyah lā li izhār al-sawāb bal li ilzām al-khasm}), or rejecting the truth despite knowing its validity. Cf. Van Ess description of a person committing \textit{mukābarah} as “wer die Wahrheit dann selbst zurückweist, nachdem er sie gekannt hat.” Van Ess, \textit{Die Erkenntnislehre des ʿAḍudaddīn al-Īcī}, 70, note 1.
In the third situation, whereby he raises objection [to the claimant] by adducing some proof or argument, it is called *muʿāraḍah* [literally: opposition, resistance, confrontation]. Again, merely objecting to the claimant with no supporting argument will constitute arrogance (*mukābarah*) that is unanimously unacceptable.

The task of the claimant (*muʿallil*) [will vary according to varying situations). In the case of *munāqaḍah*, [what he should do is] to establish the truth of the objected premise either [i] by adducing some proof or [ii] by reminding [the questioner of its truth] or [iii] by repudiating the questioner’s corroboration

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43 Borrowed from jurisprudential dialectic, the term *muʿallil* literally means the one who puts forth a legally valid reason (*ʿillah*) to justify a ruling (*ḥukm*) or *fatwā*. In this context, it refers to the person who lays down a claim (hence the ‘claimant’), proposes a thesis (hence the ‘proponent’) or seeks to defend it (hence the ‘defendant’) and reply to any objection (hence sometimes also called the ‘answerer’ or ‘respondent’ (*mujīb*) all of which are used interchangeably.
if deemed equivalent \((\textit{musāwī})\) to [the denial of the original claim], as mere objection is useless, or [iv] by proving what he claims to be true with another argument.

In the case of \textit{naqḍ}, [what he should do is] either to dismiss his [questioner’s] supporting witness by raising objection [to the testimony] or to establish the truth of his own claim [i.e. thesis] by presenting another argument.

In the case of \textit{muʿāradah},[what he should do is] to challenge or question the validity of his opponent’s argument so that the claimant would become the questioner and \textit{vice versa}.

Sometimes the one assuming the role of claimant may not himself be the person who put forth the thesis, as he might have simply taken it from someone else so that objection cannot be addressed to him and he
can only be asked to verify what he has reported.

What we have explained above is the procedure of disputation.

As for the purpose [of disputation], it is either [i] to defeat the claimant so that he cannot bring forth any argument anymore and will remain silent thereafter—and this is called ifḥām [literally: silencing, brushing off, dumfounding] or [ii] to defeat the questioner so that he cannot put forth any more challenge to the argument, i.e. when the claimant’s argument ends up in a proposition that must be conceded as it is necessarily true or widely accepted— and this is called ilzām [literally: compulsion, coercion, necessitation]. In both cases the disputation will come to an end, as neither one of them [i.e. the questioner and the claimant] will be able perform their respective tasks infinitely (lā ilā nihāyah).
There are nine rules of conduct [to be observed] in disputation practice:

The debater should avoid terseness and long-windedness, and should not use unfamiliar words and ambiguous terms, in which case he may demand clarification [from the opponent].

He should avoid interrupting [or attacking] the opponent [while presenting his case] unless he has fully understood it; hence, repetition is allowed. Moreover, he should not digress or bring up something irrelevant to the issue being discussed. He should also refrain from laughing, shouting, etc. He should not engage in disputation with high-ranking people or individuals who hold important positions in society. During the debate, he should not belittle or abuse the opponent.

This is all that I wish to delineate on the subject.
Success is due to God in showing the truth and in inspiring accuracy.
End.

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Concluding Remarks
There is little doubt that Ṭāşköprüzāde’s short treatise on the art of debate was apparently written in response to the queries by some of his students and colleagues who needed a kind of manual or textbook on the subject that is neither too short nor too long, by introducing the most important things and leaving out extraneous and irrelevant matter.

Notwithstanding its pedagogical purpose, Ṭāşköprüzāde’s text presented here affords a glimpse into a pre-modern intellectual culture which has survived to modern times. As well as in the medieval Muslim world, each scholar in medieval Europe had to pass a disputation at least once in his career, but scholars were also invited to public debate, where the proponent or respondent would make an assertion or defend a thesis that the opponent should try to refute with a counter thesis or antithesis, while the audience stood behind the barriers (carceres).

We may compare Ṭāşköprüzāde’s exposition with the Scholastic disputation procedure that consists of four steps: casting doubt, conducting investigation, understanding the point, expressing objection, and suggesting solution. In Germany, for example, disputation in the form of oral examination is part of the requirements for obtaining a doctoral degree (Promotion) and a professorial title (Habilitation), although the details thereof may vary from one university to another.
References


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Appendix: Ṭaşköprüzade’s text in MS

Nos.99999.2311.txt
~[2311] fols. 97v-102v: Tashk?prizade, Ahmad Ibn Mustafa
طاشکؤپرژاده، احمد بن مصطفی
Risala fi ilm adab al-bahth
with commentary by the same author and glosses in the margin.
On the art of disputation. On the author (died 968/1560)
and text ? GAL II 426 no. 13 and S II 633 no. 13
(unpublished).

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