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# Methodos

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Argumentation and Arabic Philosophy of Language

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## Argumentation and Arabic Philosophy of Language : Introduction

*Argumentation et philosophie arabe du langage : introduction*

SHAHID RAHMAN ET WALTER EDWARD YOUNG

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### *Texte intégral*

We are grateful for the outstanding contributions that followed our call for papers and hope that the present volume will inspire further interdisciplinary research on the intersection between epistemology, philosophy of language, logic, and Argumentation theory while delving farther into the astounding richness of Islamicate dialectical theory. Our sincere appreciation goes to our untiring and ever-supportive colleague and chief editor Leone Gazziero (CNRS, UMR 8163 « Savoirs, Textes, Langage », Université de Lille), to Anne Dourlens (Alithila, Halma-UMR 8164, STL-UMR 8163) for the excellent editorial help and to members of the editorial board who enthusiastically supported the present special issue. Much gratitude is also due to the excellent work of numerous reviewers whose reports contributed to the refinement of the papers collected here.

- 1 The domain of Islamic thought and intellectual history boasts an important body of studies relevant to the Arabic philosophy of language, as well as a growing interest in Islamicate argumentation theory and practice.<sup>1</sup> There remains, however, a dearth of volumes which pool research from both areas and examine them together. Filling this gap is more critical than ever. In our time, significant work is being conducted in argumentation theory, but little of it draws from, or relates to, the rich intellectual traditions of Islam. Exceedingly few historians of logic, let alone modern argumentation theorists, seem to have heard of Islamicate dialectical theory (*jadal*, *munāẓara*, or *ādāb al-baḥṭh*), much less benefited from its millennium of insightful developments.<sup>2</sup>



- 2 With this in mind, the main objective behind this special volume of *Methodos* was to provide a venue for studies of hermeneutics, linguistic analysis, and deductive reasoning in the theory / practice of argumentation relevant to the Arabic philosophy of language, including contributions on:
1. theories which are geared towards argument (e.g., dialectical justifications and objections, linguistic fallacies, strategies and protocols for engagement on particular issues, etc.);
  2. the dynamic of argument in shaping concepts and theories (e.g., explaining how systematic argument fashioned certain scholars' solutions); and
  3. theories "in action" (e.g., argument analyses of the historical, scholarly dialectic on a certain problem).
- 3 Moreover, and understanding that interdisciplinarity is a quintessential feature of premodern Islamic thought, we were eager to attract contributions from a spectrum of disciplines (e.g., philosophy, theology, and law) so as to provide testimony for the dynamic "unity in diversity" of Islamic thought. Thanks to the efforts of our contributors, we are happy to report a measure of success in both of these objectives.
- 4 The contributed studies are fascinating—both individually and collectively—and will speak for themselves in terms of relevance and benefits to the field. We would nevertheless do well to first consider their subjects in the larger historical and theoretical contexts within which they took shape. Therefore, we will now attempt to situate Islamicate argumentation theory vis-à-vis the broader, traditional division of sciences into "[purely] rational" (*'aqlī*) and "transmitted" (*naqlī*), then offer some pertinent developmental and methodological observations, before briefly introducing this special issue's contributions.

## Islamicate Argumentation in the Rational and Transmitted Sciences

- 5 Medieval Muslim scholars writing in Arabic distinguished between "[purely] rational sciences" (*'ulūm 'aqliyya*) and "transmitted sciences" (*'ulūm naqliyya*). The former included philosophy, logic, astronomy, and other such sciences as whose primary wellspring was the human intellect. The latter included theology, law, legal theory, and other such disciplines which—though also eminently rational—were ultimately anchored in scripture.<sup>3</sup>
- 6 As it happens, multiple genres and streams of argumentation theory may be found in both branches. The *'ulūm 'aqliyya* incorporated peripatetic logic (*manṭiq*), including its argumentative modes of demonstration (*burhān*), dialectic (*jadal*), rhetoric (*khiṭāba*), and sophistry (*safsaṭa*), while the *'ulūm naqliyya* incorporated, among other genres, the pluralistic methods of dialectical theology (*kalām*), legal theory (*uṣūl al-fiqh*) and juristic dialectic (*jadal / khilāf*), and, from the 14<sup>th</sup> century onwards, the "protocols of dialectical inquiry and disputation" (*ādāb al-baḥṭh wa-l-munāẓara*).
- 7 Both branches thus developed sophisticated theories of argumentation, and both devoted a great deal of attention to the logical and semantic structure of arguments. However, whereas the study of argumentation in the *'ulūm 'aqliyya* focused primarily on its logical architecture (within the framework of peripatetic logic), argumentation theory in the *'ulūm naqliyya* was concerned first and foremost with dialectical moves that were deemed to be legitimate or illegitimate vis-à-vis the constitution of meaning. Arguably, it is therefore within the transmitted sciences that Islamicate thinkers developed their most original contributions to argumentation theory—far beyond any putative Aristotelian origins, and continuing long after later syllogistic remodelings.<sup>4</sup>



The development of dialectical theories within the transmitted sciences involved the identification not only of logical moves, but of arguments and sub-arguments

concerned with the dynamics of meaning, including the manner in which different situations and contexts shape the meaning of an expression. Furthermore, as we will briefly discuss below, the intertwining of logical and semantic concepts within the *‘ulūm naqliyya* is best understood as governed by interaction rules within a general, dynamic argumentative framework. Indeed, one of the most distinctive features of transmitted-science argumentation theories—those of *uṣūl al-fiqh* in particular—is that they were conceived by their elaborators as dynamic systems of dialectical rules whose main purpose was to provide (by means of rational arguments and on rational grounds) solutions to new and perennially contended problems, based on the specialists’ understanding of the primary (revelatory) sources.

- 9 The degree of complexity and sophistication reached in this pursuit is nothing short of astounding. Certain 11th century CE manuals of juristic dialectic, for example, incorporated collections of well over three hundred argumentative patterns, including both destructive and cooperative moves—a virtual treasure trove of dialectical justifications, objections, and responses. This is of enormous value for modern theorists. Among other things, its study provides new perspectives on the understanding of illegitimate moves, along with solutions for rectifying arguments prone to possible errors and pitfalls. Moreover, these works may be said to comprise a double innovation. On the one hand, rather than propounding two dialectics, one destructive and one constructive, they internalize both moments in a single debate, wherein contesting and collaborative moves constitute an inquisitive progression towards establishing the truth. On the other hand, they offer a plethora of contesting moves engendering multiple forms of classification for possible responses. Different to other kinds of debate, constructive responses may in fact be prompted by the challenger, who, in this way, plainly collaborates in the search for solutions.

## Developmental Trajectories for Dialectics in the Transmitted Sciences<sup>5</sup>

- 10 The practice of dialectical disputation among Muslim scholars may well be as old as the very disciplines and intellectual projects they elaborated, whether normative, speculative, or empirical. The evolution of its theory may therefore be said to have unfolded over some 1,400 years; unsurprisingly, it is manifold, diversified, and complex. In fact, with the modern study of Islamicate Dialectics still in its infancy (despite a slow, but steadily growing interest), it remains difficult to plot a comprehensive developmental trajectory for its various genres and applications of *jadāl*, *khilāf*, *munāẓara*, and the *ādāb al-baḥth*. At the very least level of analysis, however, three broad periods may be proposed: (1) the movement from “proto-system” teachings and practices to “full-system” theories;<sup>6</sup> (2) the further maturation of discipline-specific dialectical theories and a patently logical turn; and (3) the explosion and gradual dominance of the universal *ādāb al-baḥth* genre.

### From proto-system to full-system (7th-10th centuries CE)

- 11 Gradually throughout Islam’s first two centuries, and drawing on a common pool of older argumentation practices enriched with those (e.g., Qur’ānic and Sunnaic) which may be said to be distinctly Islamic, Muslim scholars forged—in frequent disputation—various intellectual disciplines and schools. Certainly, and especially in the evolving disciplines of law, theology, and grammar, a proto-system of dialectical teaching and practice, exhibiting common disputation patterns, is evident by the eighth century CE. Testifying to this is the recorded argumentative practices of, among numerous others, such seminal figures as Abū Ḥanīfa, Ja’far al-Ṣādiq, and al-Shāfi‘ī. Along with



refutation tracts and catalogues of disagreement, the first, full-system dialectical theory treatises eventually emerged by the end of the ninth century CE and beginning of the tenth, at the hands of such influential scholars as Ibn al-Rāwandī, Ibn Surayj and his circle, and al-Ash'arī.

## Further maturation and the logical turn (11th-13th centuries CE)

- 12 The lion's share of development in this period is most evident in the flourishing domain of eleventh-century-CE juristic dialectic (*jadāl / khilāf*), as witnessed by the advanced *qiyās*-oriented dialectic of Abū al-Ḥusayn al-Baṣrī, Fakhr al-Islām al-Bazdawī, and Shams al-A'imma al-Sarakhsī, and the systematic and highly detailed compendia of dialectical moves and procedures compiled by Abū Ishāq al-Shīrāzī and his students (especially Abū al-Walīd al-Bājī and Ibn 'Aqīl), and by Imām al-Ḥaramayn al-Juwaynī. The latter's student al-Ghazālī is often credited with the first and/or most influential infusion of peripatetic logic into Islamic legal theory, a feature fully entrenched a century later in a hugely influential treatise by Ibn al-Ḥājib (the self-bridgment of which eventually accrued more than ninety commentaries and forty supercommentaries and glosses). In parallel to these developments, the twelfth-century-CE eastern school of Raḍī al-Dīn al-Nisābūrī and students, especially Rukn al-Dīn al-'Amīdī, promoted a streamlined and logicized juristic dialectic which, taken up and further developed by Burhān al-Dīn al-Nasafī in the thirteenth century, became increasingly popular further west as well (despite a strong critique from Ibn Taymiyya). This concise method of *jadāl / khilāf* was marked especially by a core trio of logical relations: *talāzum / mulāzama* (necessary entailment), *tanāfin / munāfā* (mutual exclusivity), and *dawarān* (causal concomitance). All three are common to the dialectical theory of al-Nasafī's student, Shams al-Dīn al-Samarqandī, whose famous reworking and universalizing of his predecessor's juristic dialectic became, in his *Risāla fī ādāb al-baḥth* (*Treatise on the protocols of dialectical inquiry*) the founding work of a very popular new genre.

## The dominance of the universal ādāb al-baḥth (14th century CE to present)

- 13 As a mark of its influence, al-Samarqandī's *Risāla* not only accrued, over following centuries (into modern times), some fifty commentaries and glosses, but it inspired numerous, and often quite famous, scholars to compose new *ādāb al-baḥth* treatises, several of which attracted their own, extensive commentary traditions. These latter included, in the fourteenth through sixteenth centuries CE, treatises by 'Aḍud al-Dīn al-Ījī (with forty-five commentaries and glosses), Taşköprüzade (with twelve), Birgivi (with seven), and several others. The seventeenth through nineteenth centuries saw not only a flourishing of commentaries on all these texts, but the composition of over twenty new *ādāb al-baḥth* treatises, including those by Adanavi (whose self-commentary accrued eight glosses), Saçaklızade (with nine commentaries), and Gelenbevi (with three). Certainly, commentaries on Ibn al-Ḥājib's *uṣūl* and *jadāl* continued throughout this era, along with a handful more of juristic *jadāl* contributions, but Islamicate dialectics from the 14th century CE onward is clearly dominated by the *ādāb al-baḥth*. In fact, the 20th century brought at least seven new *ādāb al-baḥth* treatises, with that of al-Shinqīṭī evincing a high popularity to this day.



# Qiyās-Theory: A key legacy of dialectic in the transmitted sciences

14 Forged over centuries in continual dialectic, Sunni jurists' theories of *qiyās* developed in-step with refinements and advances in both legal theory (*uṣūl al-fiqh*) and dialectic (*jadal*). Moreover, the logical and epistemological shaping of dialectical theories and practices both deepened and extended the methods for causal justification (*masālik al-ta'īl*) developed within these theories of *qiyās*. Being that several of the present volume's contributions relate directly or indirectly to *qiyās* and to its logical shaping in disputation, we will here briefly introduce this markedly dialectical mode of inference, before turning to the core logical relations which came to infuse Islamicate dialectics after the logical turn described above. [NB: what follows is largely extracted from the introduction to our article "In Existence and in Nonexistence" in this current issue of *Methodos*.]

15 The many debates and elaborations on *qiyās*, which might be translated "correlational inference" (more often, if less accurately, "analogy"),<sup>7</sup> together constitute one of the finest outcomes of the argumentative approach to legal reasoning within Islamic Law. A particularly lucid example is the systematization of the respected Shāfi'ī theoretician Abū Ishāq al-Shīrāzī (mentioned above, in the second period), upon which the following is based.<sup>8</sup>

16 The aim of *qiyās* is to provide a rational ground for the application of a juridical ruling to a given case which has not been directly and unequivocally pronounced upon in the primary juridical sources (i.e., the Qur'ān, Sunna [Prophet's example], and *Ijmā'* [consensus]). It combines heuristic (and/or hermeneutic) moves with logical inferences; and the archetype of *qiyās* adheres to the following pattern:

In order to establish whether or not a given juridical ruling (*ḥukm*) applies to a novel or contended case, called the branch-case (*far'*), we look for a relevant, authoritatively determined root-case (*aṣl*) bearing that ruling in the primary sources of law (Qur'ān, Sunna, and *Ijmā'*). We next attempt to determine the property (*waṣf*) or set of properties in the root-case which constitutes the causal condition, or occasioning conditions, or *ratio legis* (*'illa*) giving rise to its ruling. If it is "probable" (*ẓannī*) that this property occasions the ruling, and it is shared by the branch-case, we may infer that it is equally productive of that ruling in the branch-case. The novel or contended branch-case thus falls under that juridical ruling, and the range of its application is extended.

17 When the occasioning factor (*'illa*) is made explicit by the sources, or is capable of being rationally inferred by adequately identifying the relevant property or set of properties, we may proceed via a "correlational inference of the cause" (*qiyās al-'illa*). The crucial step underlying this form of argumentation is thus the identification of the *'illa* that gives rise to the authoritative root-case's ruling. When the legal occasioning factor (*'illa*) is neither made explicit by the sources, nor capable of being rationally inferred, however, we might next resort to "correlational inference of indication" (*qiyās al-dalāla*), which, in lieu of the *'illa*, is based on pinpointing specific, relevant parallelisms between sets of rulings (and thus inferring that whatever the *'illa* may be, it is shared by such cases). Should even this prove infeasible, we might finally resort to the (highly contentious) "correlational inference of resemblance" (*qiyās al-shabah*), which is based merely on the presence of shared, but either non-causal or indeterminable, properties.

18 Thus, *qiyās al-dalāla* and *qiyās al-shabah*—which, far more than *qiyās al-'illa*, merit the label "arguments by analogy" (or, better yet, "arguments *a pari*")—are put into action when the *'illa* grounding the application of a given ruling is not known. The plausibility of a conclusion attained by parallelism between rulings (*qiyās al-dalāla*) is considered to be of a higher epistemic degree than a conclusion obtained by resemblance in respect to some set of (relevant) properties (*qiyās al-shabah*). And





conclusions by either have a lower epistemic standing than conclusions inferred via a known, pinpointed, and share legal occasioning factor (*qiyās al-‘illa*).

- 19 It is important to note that the whole of *qiyās* procedure involves two main dialectical steps: one concerns the epistemological and hermeneutical task of identifying the property or properties claimed to occasion the ruling, the second—the logical—step assumes that the first has been confirmed. The first involves sub-arguments and counterarguments that are not formal, but contentual or material, the second involves dialectical rules for logical reasoning. Contesting some legal argument might involve contesting a logical mistake, and this would evoke fallacies from the traditional theory of the syllogism, constituting a group commonly referenced as *mughālaqāt* in the logic books. In the context of juristic dialectic, however, the most relevant form of objections concern the first step whereby the semantic link between the property and the ruling is claimed to hold. Again, its sub-arguments and counterarguments are not formal; they are, rather, more probable than certain, and thus always prone to further revision. Agreement can be settled at some point, but the whole process can also start again.

- 20 A cardinal feature of al-Shīrāzī’s take on *qiyās al-‘illa* is his particular notion of efficiency (*ta’tḥīr*), which tests whether the property P purported to be efficient in occasioning the juridical ruling at stake is indeed so. For al-Shīrāzī, *ta’tḥīr* consists of two complementary procedures:

co-presence (*ṭard*): whenever the property is present, the ruling is also present

and

co-absence (*‘aks*): whenever the property is absent, the ruling is also absent.

While co-presence examines whether ruling H follows from verifying the presence of property P, co-absence examines whether exemption from ruling H follows from verifying the absence of P. This test of a property’s causal efficiency is elsewhere and more commonly called “co-presence and co-absence” (*al-ṭard wa’l-‘aks*) or “concomitance” (*dawarān*), and listed among the “modes of causal justification” (*masālik al-ta’līl*).<sup>9</sup> As for the notion of “efficiency” (*ta’tḥīr*), other authors subscribed to yet different notions; al-Ghazālī, for example, deemed it to be a direct designation of the cause (*‘illa*) by either univocal source-text (*naṣṣ*) or consensus (*ijmā’*).<sup>10</sup>

## The logical turn and its dialogical underpinnings

- 21 The logical turn brought a new focus to the semantic and logical links between property and effect (beyond the restricted legal effect), and more generally to the logical characterization of concomitance. As mentioned above, the logical shaping of dialectical theory, carried over into the *ādāb al-baḥṭh*, focused on the trio of relations known as:

*talāzum* / *mulāzama* (necessary entailment),

*tanāfīn* / *munāfā* (mutual exclusivity), and

*dawarān* (causal concomitance).<sup>11</sup>

- 22 *Talāzum* / *mulāzama* is often also translated as “implication.” However, it is important to observe that there are two different, intertwined levels of analysis for the links between antecedent and consequent, or entailer and entailed: one is a semantic link, the other is a link which may be rendered as some kind of logical connective.

- 23 The semantic level concerns the links between concepts, such as we find between *Living Being* and *Knowing Being*, to adapt a common example in the later dialectical



literature.<sup>12</sup> This level does not directly render a proposition but rather the semantics conditions out of which a proposition obtains: *Knowing Being entails Living Being*:

For any instance *x* of the concept *Knowing Being* the concept *Living Being* can be obtained by a semantic process that renders instances of the latter out of instances of the former.

- 24 In other words, at this level of analysis *Living Being* can be reconceived not merely as a concept, but as consequent to a propositional function defined over *Knowing Being*.<sup>13</sup> At a further (connective) level of analysis this either constitutes a propositional implication such as *if it is knowing then it is living*, or some universal proposition such as *Every knowing being is a living being*.

Note that the connective level presupposes the semantic level. Only when we know how one concept is dependent upon another one, can we render the corresponding logical connective or quantifier.

Placing both levels of analysis, as we should, in a dialogical setting, the following points become clear:

If *R* asserts that something is knowing, then *Q* can ask him to further assert that it is living.

Moreover, asserting the implication *If it is knowing, then it is living*, presupposes that the semantic link between *knowing* and *living* has been previously endorsed. If such an endorsement took place, it was also the outcome of a previous dialogical interaction—without such an assumption the implication is purely syntactic. We might call this, more generally, the *dialogical meaning explanation* of the logical constant (including connectives and quantifiers).<sup>14</sup>

Once the logical constant has been constituted out of its dialogical meaning explanation, those moves can be identified, allowing a higher level—namely, the strategic level—to be rendered as elimination rules (*modus ponens*, for the case of implication).

- 25 From this perspective the semantic and logical analysis is a consequence of the dialogical interaction underlying a debate on meaning and its possible extensions. Many contemporary reconstructions that appeal to relevant, modal, or other forms of so-called non-classical logics, seem to overlook the fact that it is the dialogical constitution of meaning that leads the way in the logical shaping of dialectics. As dialogicians often put it: the dialogical conception of logic is not logic plus dialogical interaction, but it is dialogical interaction that shapes both meaning and logical reasoning.<sup>15</sup>

- 26 A similar set of considerations apply to the relation of *tanāfin* / *munāfā* (mutual exclusivity), and *dawarān* (concomitance). As for *tanāfin* / *munāfā* the dialogical meaning explanation requires the endorsement of the (presupposed) incompatibility of two concepts, such as the contraries *Whiteness* and *Blackness*, or the contradictories *Existence* and *Non-Existence*, out of which the dialogical meaning explanation of the exclusive disjunction results—namely: if *R* asserts *It is either white or black*, and *Q* asks which one is the case, then *R* can choose one, but only exactly one. Furthermore, if *R* also asserts that one side is *not* the case, e.g., “it is not existent,” then *Q* can force him to concede the other side: “it is nonexistent.” This is what the disjunctive syllogism (i.e., one instance of elimination rule for disjunctions) expresses when its dialogical roots are abstracted away.<sup>16</sup>

- 27 The semantic analysis in the case of *dawarān* (concomitance) provides a dialogical meaning explanation making it plausible to conceptually link an effect to a presumed cause with varying degrees of certitude. For instance, once it has been established with some degree of certitude that drinking scammony leads to purgation, different inferential patterns can be brought to bear.



28 A key insight of the logical turn in Islamicate dialectics, so we claim, is that—different to what we find in mainstream, contemporary logics—Islamicate (dia)logical analysis did not seem to practice the syntax-first assumption, whereby un-interpreted, well-



formed lists of signs are given a semantics by means of a metalinguistic device (the interpretation function) that links these lists with a universe of discourse. Rather, the rules that determine well-formed syntactical expressions are constituted at the same time as conceptual links that give rise to meaningful expressions, and these rules amount to dialogical meaning explanations. In short, the logical and dialectical structure at work is of the sort we find embedded in a *fully interpreted language*: a language having a content constituted by the conceptual links that dialogical interaction brings to the fore.

- 29 If this is accurate, the logical turn within the framework of Islamicate dialectics should not be seen as importing a deductive system with its own—say, truth-functional—semantics, but rather as the result of a *new epistemological process* by means of which dialogical meaning explanations were generalized beyond the particular conceptual frameworks that gave rise to them.

## Contributions to this volume

- 30 Each of our authors brings new insight to the intertwining of meaning, argumentation, and deductive reasoning in the Islamicate tradition, ensuring that this volume of *Methodos* will become a reference in the field for some time to come.
- 31 In “Modalities of Argumentation and Structural Characteristics of Early Islamic Theological Discourse,” **Omer Awass** (American Islamic College, Chicago) shows not only that argumentation structured Islamic theological thought from the start, but that various reasoning patterns at work in theological debates have their source in Quranic content itself, rather than imported logical or dialectical forms of deductive reasoning. Awass focuses on the analysis of excerpts from three early texts, including Ḥasan ibn Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥanafīyya’s treatise on *qadar* (predestination), Ḥasan al-Baṣrī’s letter on the same issue to the Umayyad Caliph ‘Abd al-Malik, and Umayyad Caliph ‘Umar ibn ‘Abd al-‘Azīz’s letter against the Qadarites (advocates of free will). Among other things, Awass identifies the use of certain logical inferences (in particular a dialogical use of an exclusive disjunctive syllogism, combined with the *modus ponens*) which serves as an excellent illustration of our point made above—namely, that logical analysis should be thought of as embedded in a fully interpreted language, structured within a dialogical framework.
- 32 In “Al-Ash‘arī’s *Adab al-jadal* : A Few Remarks on its Genre,” **Abdessamad Belhaj** (UCLouvain) engages a crucial issue in the history and nature of dialectical reasoning within the Islamicate tradition—namely, the origin of its constituent elements. Should we trace them in Aristotle’s *Topics*, or in Islamic Theology, Philosophy, or Jurisprudence? In previous work, the author has advocated a central role for juridical dialectics in the history of Islamic disputation theory, and he acknowledges Young’s argument for the priority of juridical dialectics in “forging” both legal and dialectical theory. In the present paper, Belhaj provides yet further arguments for the juristic genealogy of Islamicate dialectical theory by examining one of the earliest extant sources for Islamic *theological* argumentation theory—namely, al-Ash‘arī’s (d. 936 CE) *Adab al-jadal*, as it survives, reworked, in a forty-page text in Ibn Fūrak’s (d. 1015 CE) *Mujarrad maqālāt al-Ash‘arī*. Belhaj’s analysis of the terminology, procedure, and purpose of dialectical questions and answers in al-Ash‘arī’s *Adab al-jadal* brings him to conclude that this source indeed owes its structure to juridical dialectics. In so doing, he contests both the view that al-Ash‘arī’s *Adab al-jadal* bears the mark of philosophical influence, via, e.g., Aristotle’s *Posterior Analytics*, and the view that it was theological debates within the *kalām* tradition which led to the development of the discipline of Islamic disputation (*jadal* / *munāẓara*). His contribution invites further critical study of Ibn Fūrak’s rendering of al-Ash‘arī’s *Adab al-jadal*, in order to evaluate whatever role this work may have played in the subsequent development of Islamicate dialectical theory.



33 In “Linguistic philosophy in modern *uṣūl al-fiqh*: al-Ākhund al-Khurāsānī (d. 1911) on seeking something without willing it to be,” **Ali-Reza Bhojani** (Department of Theology and Religious Studies, University of Birmingham) elucidates a debate on the meaning of the terms *ṭalab* (seeking) and *irāda* (willing), as it unfolded in a seminal modern work of *uṣūl al-fiqh*—namely, al-Ākhund al-Khurāsānī’s (d. 1911) *Kifāyat al-uṣūl*. Al-Khurāsānī argues that both terms express the same concept, provided we add the further distinction of a real (*ḥaqīqī*) and an initiating (*inshā’ī*) mode. The former denotes a real seeking or willing (e.g., commanding someone to fetch a glass of water), whereas the latter simply seeks to initiate the meaning of seeking or willing (e.g., formulating the same command as a test for obedience); importantly, in the latter case it may be argued that the resulting action does not actually reflect the exact inner state of the speaker. Accordingly, an initiating *ṭalab* may be distinct from a real *irāda*, and a real *ṭalab* may be distinct from an initiating *irāda*, without undermining the position that *ṭalab* and *irāda* are conceptually identical. Bhojani develops a rigorous historical and systematic analysis of the debate, providing new insights and perspectives on the notion of command in Islamic Law. In the course of his study, he deploys Austin’s notion of performatives, thus placing the concept of *inshā’* and the vibrant debates that it triggered (such as conformity or nonconformity with the inner state of the speaker) in a larger philosophical framework. According to Bhojani’s reading, al-Khurāsānī’s take on *inshā’* is a performative that creates meaning. Thus, in our view, this paper also contributes a lucid and well-analyzed illustration of how debates on the notion of command in *uṣūl al-fiqh* enrich our understanding of deontic modalities, with distinctions opening new paths for shaping argumentation patterns involving imperatives.

34 In “Did the Arabic Tradition Know a More Complete Version of Alexander’s *Commentary* on Aristotle’s *Topics*? The Evidence from Ps-Jābir’s *Kitāb al-Nukhab* / *Kitāb al-Baḥth*,” **Alexander Lamprakis** (Munich School of Ancient Philosophy, L.-M.-Universität München) demonstrates that the Arabic tradition must have been acquainted with a fuller version of Alexander’s exegetical work. More precisely, he carefully and rigorously confronts passages from the *Kitāb al-Nukhab* (attributed to Jābir b. Hayyān) with their counterparts in the Greek commentary. In so doing, he reaches a conclusion that confirms and complements recent research on the Greek tradition according to which the second half of Alexander’s commentary, as it comes down to us in Greek, is an excerpted and significantly shortened version of an original whose missing parts may have been known to authors active in the Islamic world. Lamprakis also contributes new perspectives on the role of the *Topics* and its methods in Islamicate epistemology, as reflected in the *Kitāb al-Nukhab*; and, in particular, in relation to the rendering of real definitions, and their difference from *propria*, in a framework where scientific discourse is shaped by a dialectical structure. In this context, Lamprakis points out that the *Kitāb al-Nukhab* refers, for instance, to the debate at *Top.* VI 4, where definitions for which the *definiens* is better known than, but posterior to, the *definiendum*, are illustrated (among other ways) by defining the point (*nuqṭa*) by means of the line (*khaṭṭ*).

35 In “Al-Juwaynī (d.478/1085) on Philosophical Method and the Critique of Analogical Reasoning,” **Abdurrahman Mihirig** (Spätantike und Arabische Philosophie, L.-M.-Universität München) examines the uses of *qiyās* within the *kalām* tradition and the different kinds of criticisms leveled against its use. More precisely, the paper focuses on al-Juwaynī’s criticism of ‘Abd al-Qāhir al-Baghdādī’s treatise on argumentation theory (*‘ilm al-jadal*). As Mihirig points out, the continued use of *qiyās* despite the criticisms leveled against it shows that the influence of Avicennan logic resulted not in logic displacing *qiyās*, but in logic being integrated into *qiyās*. As for the criticisms themselves, they focused either on the inability of *qiyās* to provide certainty, or on the fact that if certainty is achieved, then a logical deduction is at work and the use of *qiyās* is superfluous. Defenders of *qiyās*, on the other hand, insisted that even when logical steps are integrated, *qiyās* remains useful, since the ultimate source of the premises is a universal premise rooted in the sources. According to this view, the use of a (successful)



*qiyās* provides an epistemic gain—namely, pinpointing, or at least indicating, the universal law behind some judgment or ruling.

Here we would point out that if a deductive step from a universal law can be achieved, then, as observed by Rahman and Iqbal,<sup>17</sup> establishing that a given ruling applies to the branch-case of the thesis involves two main steps:

1. Recognizing (by direct or indirect indication) that the ruling under examination is dependent upon a property (or set of properties) and that there is a root-case (in the sources) exemplifying the universal law *Every instance that verifies the property also verifies the ruling*,
2. Recognizing that this general norm also applies to the branch-case.

The point is that the construction underlying the meaning of application of the ruling to the root-case is, to put it in Paul Bartha's terms,<sup>18</sup> *precursor to a generalization*.<sup>19</sup> In other words, identifying the occasioning factor for the root-case under consideration amounts to grasping it as exemplifying (the application of) a general law. This is what the notion of causality in *uṣūl al-fiqh* comes down to.

According to Mihirig, another (complementary) defence of the use of *qiyās* is its conviction power: an audience wishes not only to accept the force of an argument but to be convinced to adhere to it. To us, this suggests that the dialectical interaction that constitutes the meaning of a ruling by giving and asking for reasons is part and parcel of grasping the meaning of the universal law behind it.

36 In "Old Rivalry, Eternal Friendship: The Story of an Opponent—*al-Fuṣūl* in the *ʿIlm al-Khilāf*," **Necmettin Pehlivan** and **Hadi Ensar Ceylan** (Ankara Üniversitesi) bring, along with an excellent study, an outstanding edition of a text that the authors contend—with good evidence—was not only authored by a Shāfiʿī scholar, but by the famous logician Najm al-Dīn al-Kātibī. The text in question carries the title *al-Risāla fī qawāʿid ʿilm al-naẓar* and targets the *al-Fuṣūl fī l-jadal* of the influential Ḥanafī dialectician Burhān al-Dīn al-Nasafī—who, as mentioned above, played a decisive role in advancing that logicized dialectical theory which prepared the way for the *ādāb al-baḥth*. Pehlivan & Ceylan's edition of the text, for which they use the short-form *Opponent-al-Fuṣūl*, alone guarantees that the current volume will become a reference in the field. The authors situate the text in one of the most substantive and fruitful rivalries within Islamic legal thought—namely, that between the Ḥanafī and Shāfiʿī schools. They are also careful, however, to underscore what they call the "eternal friendship" between these schools, for they simultaneously shaped each other and themselves in pursuit of this rivalry. The matching table of contents between the edited treatise and al-Nasafī's *Fuṣūl* is an example of this. The *Opponent-al-Fuṣūl*, as might be expected of an author such as al-Kātibī, is significantly more logical than al-Nasafī's *Fuṣūl*, however. Based on this thought-provoking paper we might also suggest that the Ḥanafī-Shāfiʿī rivalry not only enriched both schools, but simultaneously shaped a general dialectical theory that eventually transcended schools and even the juristic domain itself.

37 In "Preferring Formal Language over the Face? Avicenna on the physiognomical Syllogism. Some Observations," **Jens Ole Schmitt** (Spätantike und Arabische Philosophie, L.-M.-Universität München) discusses Avicenna's take on Aristotle's physiognomical syllogism (Prior Analytics, ii.27, 70b7-70b38).<sup>20</sup> Schmitt provides a record of the main places where Avicenna deals with the physiognomical syllogism and conjectures about the reasons that might have lead Avicenna not to include the study of this form in his later works, despite the fact that he himself makes use of it in certain other writings. One of the hypotheses adduced by Schmitt is linked to Avicenna's general disfavouring of reasoning by analogy and induction—or, more precisely, the analogical and inductive steps involved in the constitution of the premisses. The author also relates this to the fact that the overall logical structure of the physiognomical syllogism is that of a deduction by hypotheses, which do not provide certainty. Indeed,



if we focus on the epistemological context of this kind of syllogism, the explanatory power achieved by the premisses is not that strong.

Here we would note, classifying the physiognomical syllogism within the broader class of analogical reasoning, that if we extrapolate from the legal to the natural context (as certain post-classical dialecticians seem to have done), this kind of syllogism might be linked to either *qiyās al-dalāla* or *qiyās al-shabah*. And these, as mentioned above, do not provide the *cause*, but only *indications* (as with Aristotle's *signs*), and therefore have a lower degree of epistemic value.<sup>21</sup> An intriguing contribution, this paper invites further reflections on the epistemological role and structure of inferences in the Avicennan and post-Avicennan logical and dialectical traditions.

- 38 In “Defending Definitions: The Tools of Disputation in the Logic of al-Fanārī,” **Aaron Spevack** (Harvard University / Brandeis University) develops an analysis of al-Fanārī's *Fawā'id al-Fanāriyya*, an influential commentary on al-Abharī's *Isagoge* (*al-Īsāghūjī*), itself a famous primer in logic. The author employs an innovative and fruitful methodology in order to navigate through al-Fanārī's notoriously difficult text—namely, he reads it peering through the lens of a later Islamic dialectical theory by Sājaqlīzādah, as put forth in his popular *ādāb al-baḥṭh* treatise *al-Waladiyya*, along with its commentary *‘Abd al-Wahhāb ‘alā al-Waladiyya*. This method allows the author to “demonstrate how the seemingly obtuse expressions of al-Fanārī's commentary become clearer when the tools, terms, and methods of disputation are identified in his writing;” and to “identify several examples of applying the rules of disputation in defense of definitions, classifications, and propositional affirmations in order to demonstrate that one cannot properly understand al-Fanārī's commentary without sufficient knowledge of... dialectic.” Indeed, Spevack convincingly argues that “to properly understand most works of law (*fiqh*), theology (*kalām*), logic (*manṭiq*), and even the introductory grammatical sciences such as syntax and morphology, the reader must be well-versed in the science of disputation.” Among other contributions, this fascinating paper offers insights into: the classifications / ordering principles of al-Abharī's *Isagoge*; principles behind categorization of the Five Arts; principles / justifications / objections / responses relating to Islamicate definition theory; and a valuable immersion into this discourse via plentiful translations from the study's primary texts. Though inevitably through the filter of translation, we frequently hear in Spevack's paper the voices of the premodern scholars themselves, with the author's guiding analysis a fluent navigation between *Grundtext*, commentary, gloss, and supporting texts in the domain of logic (al-Kātibī, al-Jurjānī, Quṭb al-Dīn al-Rāzī, et al.), bringing additional layers to our understanding of the focal text, and supporting the research (and the reader) with supplementary explanations from relevant scholars. In addition to its obvious value to researchers, this paper will be useful in graduate level classes in Islamic philosophy / logic which broach the issues of definition / dialectic—not just for its illustrative examples, encounters with primary texts, and rational analyses, but for its exemplary weaving together of *grundtext* and commentaries.

- 39 In “On the Logical Machinery of Post-Classical Dialectic: The *Kitāb ‘Ayn al-Nazar* of Shams al-Dīn al-Samarqandī (d. 722/1322),” co-guest-editor **Walter Edward Young** (Institute of Islamic Studies, McGill University), drawing upon a recently published digital critical edition of al-Samarqandī's *‘Ayn al-Nazar* (*Wellspring of Rational Investigation*), provides a thorough discussion of three logical notions at the heart of this work—and at the heart of the logical turn itself, as mentioned above—namely: entailment (*talāzum* / *mulāzama*), mutual negation or exclusion (*tanāfin* / *munāfā*), and causal concomitance (*dawarān*). Al-Samarqandī's practical elaboration of these notions reveals a logic in action—a premodern dialogical logic for living disputation praxis. Throughout his analyses of the text, Young addresses a number of points of interest, grouped under six themes—namely: (1) the potential for cross-disciplinary advancement; (2) notions in discursive development; (3) significant or uniquely contributive formulations; (4) peculiarities of content; (5) signs of an evolving, universalist agenda; and (6) evidence that the *‘Ayn al-Nazar* was designed as a mnemonic instrument for use by disputants engaging in live dialectic.





In “In Existence and in Nonexistence: Types, Tokens, and the Analysis of *Dawarān* as a Test for Causation,” guest-editors **Shahid Rahman** (Université de Lille, CNRS-UMR-8163: STL) and **Walter Edward Young** (Institute of Islamic Studies, McGill University) delve deeply into *dawarān* and causation (*‘illiyya*) as discussed (and disputed) under the rubric of “the modes of causal justification” (*masālik al-ta’līl*). In brief, the authors interpret “in existence” and “in nonexistence” (the component states of concomitance) not as a kind of metaphor for true and false (within the framework of a classical truth-functional formal semantics), but as an accurate terminology vis-à-vis the meaning of causality statements, fully compatible with dominant Islamicate views on causal agency. The authors’ reading of *dawarān* as shaped by a finer-grained structure not only allows us to identify the efficient occasioning process as a function which takes some particular token of the *‘illa* (arguably, the property or properties which provide the ruling’s material cause) and renders a token of the general ruling type, but it allows us to elucidate the role of *ta’līl* (causal justification) in shaping an epistemological theory of argument to the best explanation: a sophisticated, premodern manifestation of abductive reasoning.

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## Notes

1 On argumentation, see, among others: Larry B. Miller (2020), *Islamic Disputation Theory: The Uses & Rules of Argument in Medieval Islam*, Cham, Springer; Khaled El-Rouayheb (2015), *Islamic Intellectual History in the Seventeenth Century: Scholarly Currents in the Ottoman Empire and the Maghreb*, New York, Cambridge University Press [esp. chap 2]; Abdessamad Belhaj (2010), *Argumentation et Dialectique en Islam: Formes et Séquences de la Munāẓara*, Louvain, Presses Universitaires de Louvain; Amir Dziri (2015), *Die Ars Disputationis in der islamischen Scholastik: Grundzüge der muslimischen Argumentations- und Beweislehre*, Freiburg im Breisgau, Kalām; Wael B. Hallaq (1990), "Logic, Formal Arguments and Formalization of Arguments in Sunnī Jurisprudence," *Arabica* 37, n° 3, p. 315-58; Josef van Ess (1976), "Disputationspraxis in der Islamischen Theologie. Eine Vorläufige Skizze," *Revue des Études Islamiques* 44, p. 23-60; Shahid Rahman, Muhammad Iqbal & Youcef Soufi (2019), *Inferences by Parallel Reasoning in Islamic Jurisprudence. Al-Shīrāzī's Insights into the Dialectical Constitution of Meaning and Knowledge*, Cham, Springer; Walter E. Young (2017), *The Dialectical Forge: Juridical Disputation and the Evolution of Islamic Law*, Cham, Springer; Walter E. Young (2021), "Dialectic in the Religious Sciences," in *Encyclopaedia of Islam Three*, Kate Fleet, Gudrun Krämer, Denis Matringe, John Nawas & Everett Rowson (eds.), Brill, Online, [https://referenceworks.brillonline.com/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-3/\\*-COM\\_27351](https://referenceworks.brillonline.com/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-3/*-COM_27351).

2 By way of example, the Islamicate tradition is entirely absent from chap. 2 of the otherwise excellent *Handbook of Argumentation Theory*, which purports to render an historical overview of ancient and medieval theories of argumentation (Frans H. van Eemeren, Bart Garssen, Erik C. W. Krabbe, A. Francisca Snoeck Henkemans, Bart Verheij & Jean H. M. Wagemans (2014), *Handbook of Argumentation Theory*, Dordrecht, Springer). On the other hand, overviews such as we find in Catarina Dutilh Novaes (2021), *The Dialogical Roots of Deduction*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, p. 142-3, acknowledge the existence of Arabic dialogical argumentation theories, and even of variant streams outside of Arabic philosophy. A subsequent and grossly reductive focus on Avicenna, however, ignores centuries of sophisticated theorizing in the religious, or "transmitted," sciences (e.g., theology and law), propounded in hundreds of dialectics treatises and commentaries. Consequently, a host of dialogical contributions to logic, potential and realized, are missed, and a diminished "significance of dialogical practices for logical theorizing" is incorrectly assumed (in contrast, see, e.g., El-Rouayheb [2015], *Islamic Intellectual History*, p. 85-96, on the *ādāb al-baḥṭh* and its contributions to Ottoman relational syllogisms).

3 The division is not mutually exclusive. For instance, the post-classical *ādāb al-baḥṭh wa-l-munāẓara* (protocols of dialectical inquiry and disputation) was, by design, a universal discipline (equally applicable in philosophy, theology, and law). That being said, it is more reasonably grouped with the transmitted sciences. Though drawing much from peripatetic logic, the *ādāb al-baḥṭh* (especially in earlier iterations) is both derivative of, and significantly shaped by, the juristic dialectical tradition of *jadāl / khilāf*, and is far more similar to it than to Aristotle's dialectic.

4 As noted in Walter E. Young (2021), "Dialectic in the Religious Sciences," §2.1:

"...despite contemporaneous translations and commentaries on Aristotle's *Topics* and *Sophistical elenchi*, and continuing philosophical inquiry culminating in expansions on the Aristotelian tradition (including dialectic) by al-Fārābī and Ibn Sīnā, there was surprisingly little discernible impact on the dialectic of jurists and theologians. The influence of Aristotle – if at all traceable and despite the prominence of syllogistic reasoning in later dialectical disciplines (including the juridical) – is difficult to detect outside of philosophical dialectic. Although similar in some broader features and objectives, the dialectic of religious scholars (especially jurists and theologians) was not the dialectic of Aristotle but something at once indigenous and distinctly Islamic."



5 This section borrows heavily from Walter E. Young (2021), "Dialectic in the Religious Sciences," §2, wherein a more detailed (though still much-reduced) chronology may be found. What follows, in fact, is therefore the abridgment of an abridgment; and, for the sake of brevity, only a handful



among hundreds of Muslim dialecticians will be named here, and without reference to their dates, works, affiliations, etc.

6 On the notions of “proto-“ and “full-“ systems, see Walter E. Young (2017), *The Dialectical Forge*, p. 14.

7 See Walter E. Young (2017), *The Dialectical Forge*, p. 10.

8 A landmark on the subject of *qiyās* is Ahmad Hasan (1986), *Analogical Reasoning in Islamic Jurisprudence: a Study of the Juridical Principle of Qiyās*, Islamabad, Islamic Research Institute. Walter E. Young (2017), *The Dialectical Forge*, provides a summary of al-Shīrāzī's systematization of *qiyās*; and on this Rahman and Iqbal develop a logical analysis (Shahid Rahman, Muhammad Iqbal & Youcef Soufi [2019], *Inferences by Parallel Reasoning in Islamic Jurisprudence. Al-Shīrāzī's Insights into the Dialectical Constitution of Meaning and Knowledge*, Cham, Springer). See also Muhammad Iqbal (2022), *Arsyad al-Banjari's Insights on Parallel Reasoning and Dialectic in Law. The Development of Islamic Argumentation Theory in 18th Century in Southeast Asia*, Cham, Springer.

9 See Ahmad Hasan (1986), *Analogical Reasoning*, p. 315-330; and Walter E. Young (2019), “Concomitance to Causation: Arguing Dawarān in the Proto-Ādāb al-Baḥṭh,” in Peter Adamson (ed.), *Philosophy and Jurisprudence in the Islamic World*, Berlin, Boston, De Gruyter, p. 205-281.

10 See Ahmad Hasan (1986), *Analogical Reasoning*, p. 272-3, 284.

11 For detailed expositions on all three, see Young's article in the current volume.

12 In fact, the example in the literature is “life” and “knowing”—i.e., “If knowing exists, then life exists.”

13 In contemporary notation : *Living Being*  $\in$  prop (*x: Knowing Being*).

14 Cf. Nicolas Clerbout & Zoe McConaughy (2022), “Dialogical Logic,” in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Spring 2022 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), Online, <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/logic-dialogical/>.

15 For an overview of the dialogical stance, see Nicolas Clerbout & Zoe McConaughy (2022), “Dialogical Logic.” The classic papers on dialogical logic are published in Paul Lorenzen & Kuno Lorenz (1978), *Dialogische Logik*, Darmstadt, Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft. For recent developments, see Shahid Rahman, Zoe McConaughy, Ansten Klev & Nicolas Clerbout (2018), *Immanent Reasoning or Equality in Action. A Plaidoyer for the Play Level*, Cham, Springer. And for applications to the logical analysis of *qiyās* see Shahid Rahman, Muhammad Iqbal & Youcef Soufi (2019), *Inferences by Parallel Reasoning in Islamic Jurisprudence*.

16 In fact, the usual employment of *tanāfin* occurs as part of a supporting argument brought by R in justifying his claim, such as in: “X is the case. Why? Because it can only be that either X or not-X is the case, but not-X is absurd, so it must be that X is the case.” Clearly this use assumes the rule for disjunction just described.

17 Shahid Rahman, Muhammad Iqbal, and Youcef Soufi (2019), *Inferences by Parallel Reasoning*, p. 36.

18 Paul Bartha (2010), *By parallel reasoning. The construction and evaluation of analogical arguments*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, p. 109.

19 Mihirig mentions Bartha's *vertical model*. Shahid Rahman, Muhammad Iqbal, and Youcef Soufi (2019), *Inferences by Parallel Reasoning*, and Muhammad Iqbal, (2022), *Arsyad al-Banjari's Insights on Parallel Reasoning* furnish a detailed comparison with Bartha's model and conclude that it “rediscovers” some of the various forms of *qiyās* developed by Islamicate thinkers.

20 Recall that in this passage, preceded by his reflections on the distinction between *tekmērion* (conclusive proof/evidence) and *sēmeion* (sign as indication), Aristotle argues that it is possible to infer natural affections (*phusika pathēmata*)\* from bodily traits under the following conditions: (1) it can be agreed that natural affections change the body and the soul together, if (2) it can be agreed (or at least assumed) that there is a one-to-one relation between sign and thing signified, and if (3) we can discover the natural affection and its corresponding sign proper to each species. Aristotle raises difficulties in implementing point three in those cases in which a species, e.g. lions, can have more than one natural affection, e.g. being courageous and generous. Aristotle's solution, in short, is to examine other species where both of these natural affections can be said to belong to the species as a whole but not each individual. If in such a species there is an individual that is courageous, is not generous, but nevertheless has long limbs, then it can be assumed that an animal is courageous iff it has long limbs. The logical point is that if the middle term (having long limbs), which is wider than the minor (being a lion), can be put in one-to-one correspondence with the major term (being courageous), then the inference is logically sound. In other words, as is so often the case, the difficulty is not found in the deductive steps but in the constitution of the premisses: in this case, in establishing the convertibility of major and middle term.

\**phusika pathēmata*: affections that a species has by its own nature, are to be distinguished from those affections of the soul that are not capacities resulting from some acquisition process or



instruction—such as, to use Aristotle's own example, the affection of the soul produced by learning music. In contrast to the affection of learning music, natural affections include passions and appetites.

21 Note that Shahid Rahman, Muhammad Iqbal, and Youcef Soufi (2019), *Inferences by Parallel Reasoning*, p. 113, show that the logical structure of arguments by *naẓīr* or *parallel cases* (cf. Walter E. Young [2017], *The Dialectical Forge*, p. 117-118), one of the main forms of *qiyās al-dalāla*, require a bi-implication, just as Aristotle's convertibility condition for the validity of physiognomical syllogisms requires a bi-implication.

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## Pour citer cet article

### Référence électronique

Shahid Rahman et Walter Edward Young, « Argumentation and Arabic Philosophy of Language : Introduction », *Methodos* [En ligne], 22 | 2022, mis en ligne le 15 mai 2022, consulté le 03 juin 2022. URL : <http://journals.openedition.org/methodos/8833> ; DOI : <https://doi.org/10.4000/methodos.8833>

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Sur la machinerie logique de la dialectique postclassique : le *Kitāb 'Ayn al-Nazar* de Shams al-Dīn al-Samarqandī (m. 722/1322)

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