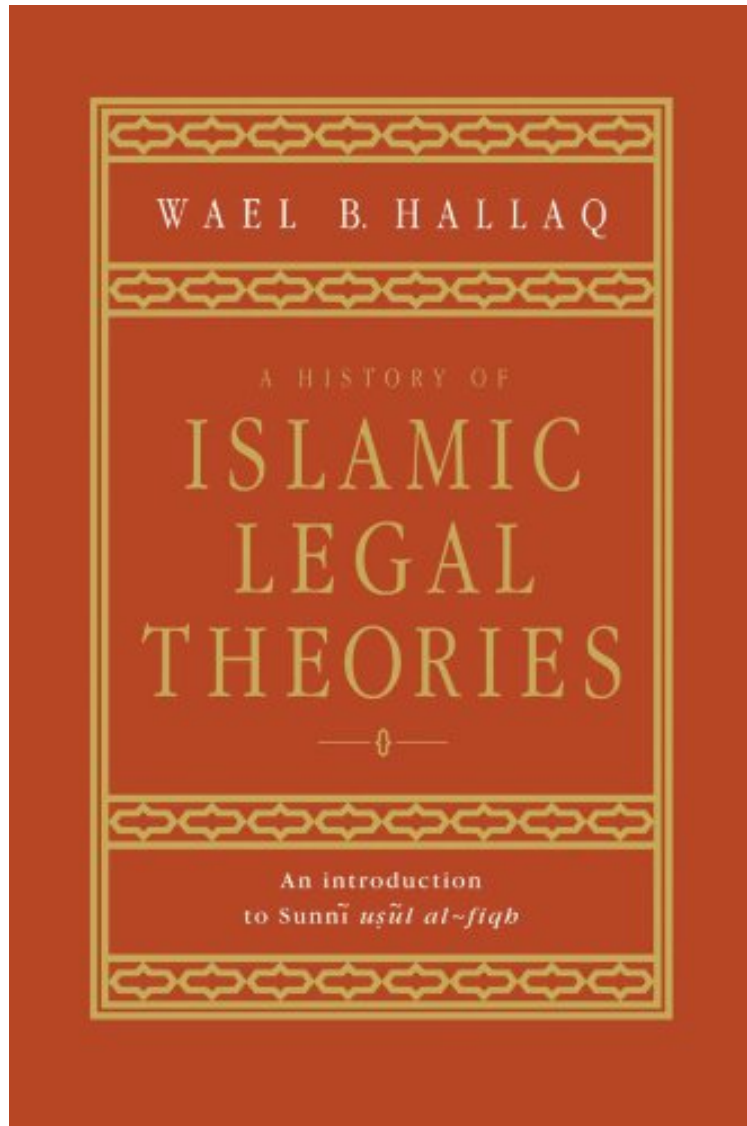


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A History of Islamic Legal Theories: An Introduction to Sunni Usul al-fiqh

Wael B. Hallaq

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Wael B. Hallaq : A History of Islamic Legal Theories: An Introduction to Sunni Usul al-fiqh before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised A History of Islamic Legal Theories: An Introduction to Sunni Usul al-fiqh:

4 of 4 people found the following review helpful. A good book for specialists By Duane This is a slow and arduous book, even for someone who knows Arabic and has a basic knowledge of the shari'a and fiqh. A better place for the

beginning scholar is Bernard Weiss' book, *The Spirit of Islamic Law*. The beginning chapters wherein the method of Islamic jurisprudence is outlined are helpful, the middle section which treats primarily the thought of medieval scholar Shatibi will only be of interest to specialists. Fortunately, the final chapters provide an engaging and interesting survey of different movements that are afoot, desiring to, in some cases radically, reformulate or reconfigure how the shari'a is discerned and applied to Islamic society today. 8 of 14 people found the following review helpful. Extremely Well Written By Private1 In addition to the existing comments: This book is extremely well written. Although it reads like a textbook, this merely reflects the high level of scholarship the author brings to his subject. The analysis is precise, thorough, and clearly explained. He touches a point once, addresses it completely, and then moves on. An essential read. 13 of 15 people found the following review helpful. A Wonderful (and the only) English Work on the Subject By Tron Honto Hallaq's book is excellent in that it manages to capture the essence of each epoch which he covers. Particularly interesting in this book is Hallaq's treatment of the birth of *usul al-fiqh* and its modern interpretations. Reading about the pre-modern zenith of Islamic jurisprudence, which Hallaq completely identifies with the work of al-Shatibi, one becomes totally skeptical to the applicability of Islamic law beyond the realm of religious ritual. However, Hallaq captures well continuity and ingenuity represented in recent reforms achieved by two groups which he will label in the last chapter of his work as the utilitarians and the liberals. The weakness of Hallaq's work is that its contents are unbalanced. I wish more time was spent on the formation of *fiqh* and the justification of its existence. Nonetheless, his treatment of these topics is solid. This work can be a little tedious @ times, but *usul al-fiqh* is itself tedious. In the whole spectrum of the book, one realizes that this itself is part and parcel to the reform occurring today. Excellent work but by no means a decisive study to answer all questions--too short.

Wael B. Hallaq is already established as one of the most eminent scholars in the field of Islamic law. In his latest book, he traces the history of Islamic legal theory from its beginnings until the modern period. The book is the first of its kind in organization, approach to the subject, and critical apparatus, and as such will be an essential tool for the understanding of Islamic legal theory in particular and Islamic law in general. Its accessibility of language and style guarantees it a readership among students and scholars, as well as anyone interested in Islam and its evolution.

"...useful for some purposes of reference and basic instruction by students of Islamic jurisprudence...." Aziz Al-Azmeh, *History of Religions* "...a lucid, nuanced, and sophisticated study based on extensive reading in the sources. A History of Islamic Legal Theories provides an excellent starting-point to follow these important debates that will help determine the future direction of Muslim societies." David S. Powers, *Middle East Quarterly* "For over a decade, Wael B. Hallaq has written articles that qualify him to write the only comprehensive introduction to the science of *usul al-fiqh* in English. He has successfully exposed the intricacies and complexities of this science in a way that will achieve his declared aim of introducing Islamic legal theory both to students of Islam and to those unfamiliar with Islamic tradition." Murteza Bedir, *MESA Bulletin* "Hallaq evidently loves a good argument, and this book is no exception. He states his claims forthrightly, challenging the rest of the field to respond. There is no doubt that this book will generate responses for years to come, and that the ensuing discussion will move the study of the theoretical underpinnings of Islamic law to a new level." *Middle East Journal* "The author of this volume, who is an important scholar of Islamic law, has fashioned a succinct and lucid entry to a complex and difficult subject." *Religious Studies* "...this book offers reading of great value for anyone curious about the future--as well as the past--of Sunni jurisprudence." Earl Finbar Murphy, H-Net