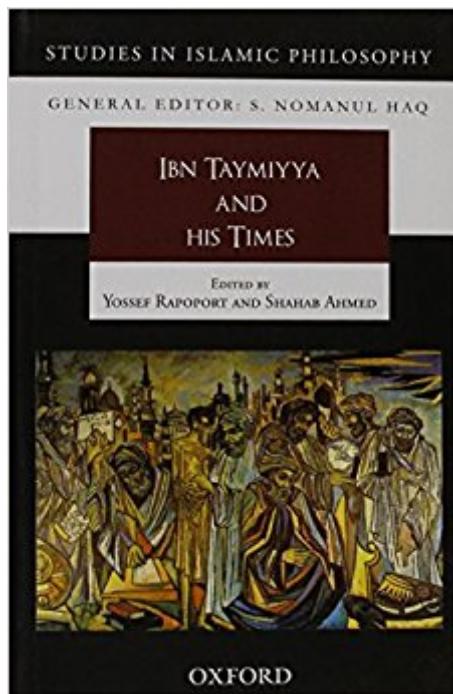


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Ibn Taymiyya And His Times (Studies In Islamic Philosophy)



Synopsis

Taqi al-Din Ibn Taymiyya (1263-1328) is one of the most controversial thinkers in Islamic history. Today he is revered by what is called the Wahhabi movement and championed by Salafi groups who demand a return to the pristine golden age of the Prophet. His writings have been a source of inspiration for radical groups to justify acts of violence and armed struggle. In order to understand the widespread present-day influence and prominence of this rather obscure medieval figure, the book, through a series of articles written by leading authorities in the field, attempts to study Ibn Taymiyya's original contributions to Islamic theology, law, Qur'anic exegesis, and political thought. The book is the first comprehensive academic treatment of Ibn Taymiyya to appear in a Western language in over half a century.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

For more attention, however, is typically accorded to extremist permutations of Ibn Taymiyya's thought in modern period, with the result that Ibn Taymiyya is invariably characterized as the evil progenitor of Islamic radicalization. (P355, Mona Hassan, *IT & his Times*) Most scholars agree that extremists misinterpreted IT thinking and used his writing out of historical context to justify their tactics to fight modern Muslim states. I finished reading the book and I discovered that he was a very complex thinker, born in a period of political instability after Baghdad was destroyed by Mongols. Most of IT views on political and legal matters are preserved in the form of legal rulings (fatawas). In recent years, his rulings known as Mongol fatawas in

response to inquiry about the permissibility of fighting the newly Islamized Mongols who repeatedly invaded Syria-Palestine have become very popular and quoted by extremists. The most of the activists of extremist groups who are using violence in order to impose Islamic order are educated in physical sciences (engineering, computer science, medicine) or seminarians (Taliban). Their knowledge of Islamic jurisprudence or history is not very deep. Ahmad Ibn-Taymmia (1263-1328), who lived under Mamluks of Egypt in Damascus. Although he was a man of pen, fought for the city of Damascus to protect against the onslaught of Mongols. In his time Mongols destroyed Abbasids. Iran was ruled by Ghazan Khan of Ilkhan (Mongol) dynasty. Although, they were converted to Sunni Islam, Ilkhans ruled by Yassa code rather than Sharia. Hence Ibn-Taymmia pronounced them heretics and declared that Muslims under Mongols were living in state of Jahiliyya. He declared jihad against Mongols. Ibn-Taymmia was the follower of school founded by Imam Hanbal. According to him best role models were first three generations of Islam (Salaf). Any deviation from their practice is bid'ah. In his opinion, Muslims who are not following teachings of Salaf, to be fought and killed. Despite his extreme political view regarding the government of his time, his positive role in jurisprudence is still admired. He criticized development of Islamic law after initial period which became rigid and imitation (Taqlidi). He promoted Ijtihad (to change) to change the laws to make them compatible with recent times. It was admired by the people of Damascus. He successfully inspired them to defend their city against Mongols. When he died, population attended his funeral procession in large numbers. It remained obscure in non-Hambalis until recently. He became mainstream thinker of Sunni Islam in last century when Wahabi finally succeeded to establish a puritan state of Saudi Arabia.

This is a first-rate book, comprised of first-rate scholars. (It's unfortunate, in this regard, that the book was published by the Lahore branch of OUP; I've found my hardcover version of the book falling apart, and I would also think the Lahore brand could decrease from the deserving prestige of the publication.) The authors give meticulous attention to their project, and the bibliography is priceless. This volume is a must-read for anyone working on Ibn Taymiyya in an academic sense, but it should also interest journalists and anyone else who finds themselves thinking about the medieval scholar and his context. Fortunately, this text contributes to an ongoing and increasing trend to locate Ibn Taymiyya as a complex and multifaceted thinker, rather than as a simplistic champion of this or that ideology. Hoover's website on Ibn Taymiyya and Bazzano's forthcoming Religion Compass articles should provide useful complements for the content of chapters in Ibn Taymiyya and His Times, as well as its bibliography. Also Kokoschka and Krawietz' edited volume

on Ibn Taymiyya and Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya. Given Michot's extensive work on Ibn Taymiyya, I lament that he didn't receive a spot in the volume; this isn't a criticism so much as an observation. All in all, two thumbs up for this book.

Good book,

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