

# Review of: "From Avicenna to Salam: The Excommunication of Muslim Scholars in the Islamic World"

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I was quite eager to review this paper after reading the title, but I am sorry to say it reads more like a pamphlet than a thorough investigation of the subject matter. It cherry-picks examples from largely different periods of history to make its point, ignoring counterexamples.

For example, prior to asking why Islam is the cause of scientific decline in the Muslim world, it ought to ask why it was the cradle for a spectacular scientific expansion and development that nurtured that of the Western world. Maybe actually observing what is happening in the Western world right now, before our eyes, could help us understand why, towards the 12th century, the Muslim world underwent a decline. Needless to say, the rise of dogmatic theologians (such as Al Ghazali and others) has been a cause, accompanied by the fact that the political rulers had a keen interest in intellectual repression. Maybe the loss of the exegetic discourse around religious texts could be the cause, more than what one associates with this or that religion or belief within a given religion.

Overall (and I am sorry to be direct), this article is superficial and lacks the depth of scholarship to make a case. I am sorry, I do not recommend publication.