

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

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This is a very ambitious paper. The author has a strong thesis and makes a number of excellent points. In general, the paper makes a good argument but is weak in several areas--the author does not discuss potential political and economic causes for excommunication as a response to certain ideas, nor does the author review sufficiently some of the work by scholars of religion on the idea of sectarianism, conversion, and excommunication. In particular, the author might consult the work of Hodgson, Bruce Lawrence, and Carl Ernst on Sufism in the middle periods of Islamic civilization. More attention needs to be paid to the idea of Salafism--the author treats it anachronistically. It would not seem to be a factor, or to be called as such, in the time period being examined. Finally, the idea of excommunication in an Islamic context is very interesting and could use more specific study on its origins, development, and application. Perhaps addressing these issues, even briefly, in addition to more carefully outlining the scope and focus of the article (its limitations), would strengthen it and reduce the unnecessarily overly broad claims.