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Were the early firaq extremists? Rethinking the history of muslim disagreement(s)
(2020) *Journal of Islamic Thought and Civilization*, 10 (1), pp. 46-65.

DOI: 10.32350/jitc.101.03

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Abstract

Many writers have associated contemporary manifestations of extremism with early Islamic sects, which is argued against in this article. The study employs critical analysis of available sources and argues for additional scrutiny. Our position is supported by detailed scrutiny of early sectarian contributions to the development of Islamic thought. We discovered remarkable limitations in the tracing of the roots to the early firaq (sects) due to a strong reliance on secondary sources muddled in the complexities of dogmatic polemics. Nonetheless, relevant historiography improved our view of what actually happened when nascent Muslims confronted humorless political and social problems. Rather than producing extremist deviants, early Islamic thought was exceedingly dynamic and governed by a pressing need to defend sound Islamic principles. Early Muslims sought answers to perennial issues and did much to stimulate subsequent Muslim philosophy and thought. Indeed, any negative understanding of this early legacy undermines the dignity of that era and people. © 2020, University of Management and Technology. All rights reserved.

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Publisher: University of Management and Technology

ISSN: 20750943

Language of Original Document: English

Abbreviated Source Title: J. Islam. Thought Civiliz.

2-s2.0-85088941677

Document Type: Article

Publication Stage: Final

Source: Scopus

Access Type: Open Access