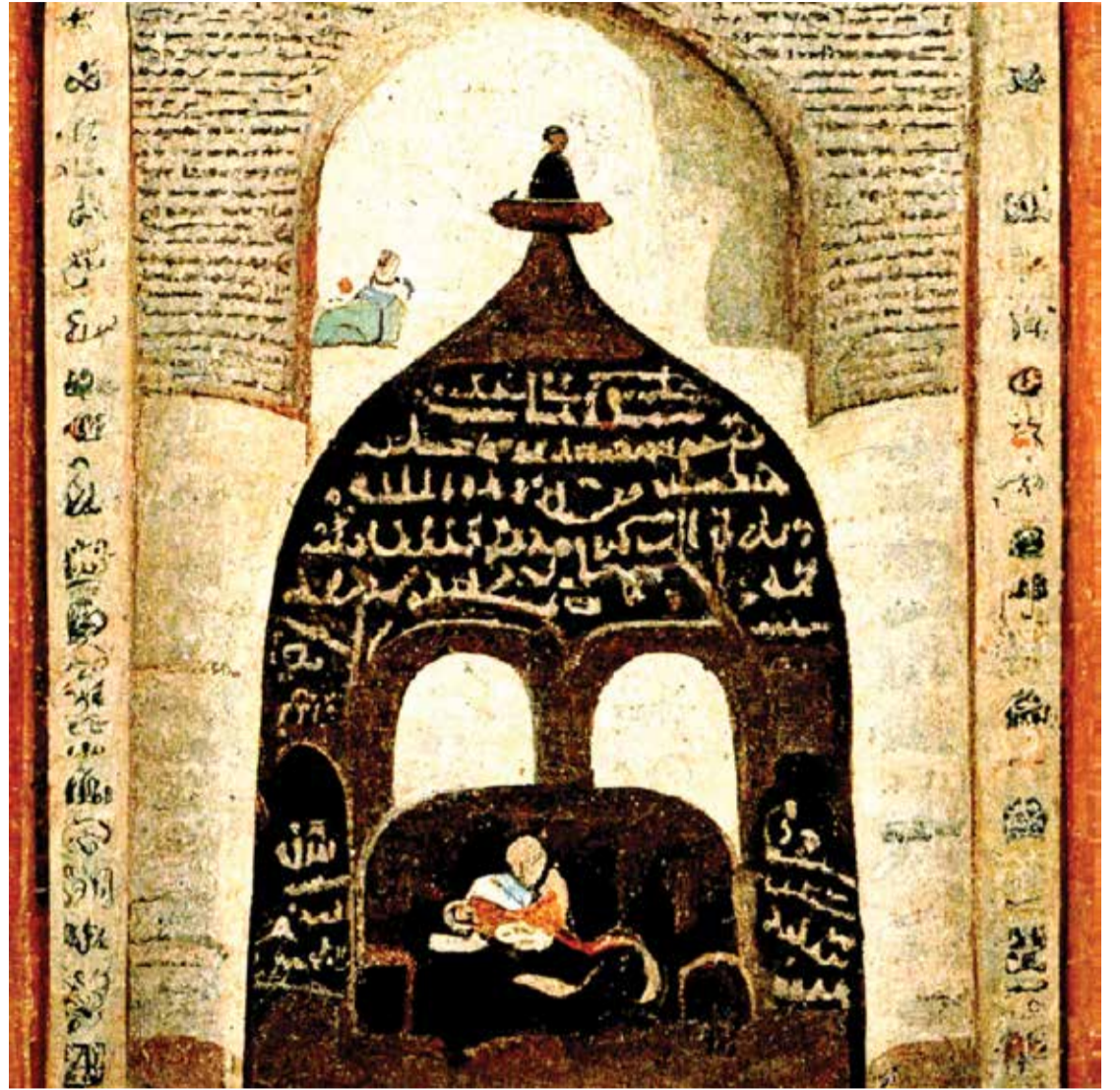


Professor of history R. Charles Weller: Islamic law sometimes of epistemology

3
PART



Al-Azhar University, associated with Al-Azhar Mosque in Cairo, is Egypt's oldest degree-granting university – and the world's second oldest degree granting university. [mapcarta.com](https://www.mapcarta.com)



[midjourney.com](https://www.midjourney.com)

how different people think and how they approach these issues. It doesn't mean I agree or disagree with any of them necessarily. And I'm not going to go on record at this point in terms of where I stand on these particular issues. I am analyzing historically as a historian, and that's my job. As a historian, I'm analyzing historically human societies and human cultures and civilizations and these kinds of issues of law, religion, inter-religious, inter-cultural, inter-civilizational relations, peace and conflict, and what lie at the roots of those kinds of relationships and those kinds of, on the one hand, examples of peace and coexistence and, in the other hand, examples of conflict and tension and misunderstanding, etc. Those are the kinds of things that I'm very concerned with and try to understand so that hopefully we can move towards more mutual understanding, peace, coexistence, and dialogue.

complicated. It's not simplistic. Are there any crimes in the world that justify the death penalty? And if so, what kinds of crimes are they? Just the question of the death penalty, I think, is a major issue in terms of how we respond to that particular sector of society and their arguments and their attempts to try to engage in reform and revision.

If there is anything else you would like to add, I would be more than glad to hear it. Andrew Forsyth wrote a book in 2019 which is about common law and natural law in the history of the US. The title of the book is 'Common Law and Natural Law in America'. He's really dealing with the answer to this question about the relationship between natural law, divine law,

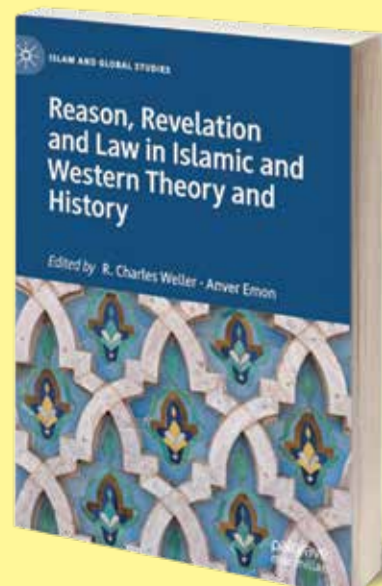
and then common law and positive law and how we historically went through shifts. We shifted from a kind of divine basis for natural law to a human basis for common law. And Hobbesian positive law has become almost the base in the West for legal doctrines, law codes, etc. It has moved us away from the divine and even natural law because they associate natural law with divine law. So, we've moved away to common law and positive law. He documents this process, at least within the American context, but he puts it in a broader global context, especially the Western context of the rationalist, the secularists, and even the atheist West that has transformed across the 18th, 19th, and 20th centuries.

CONCLUDED

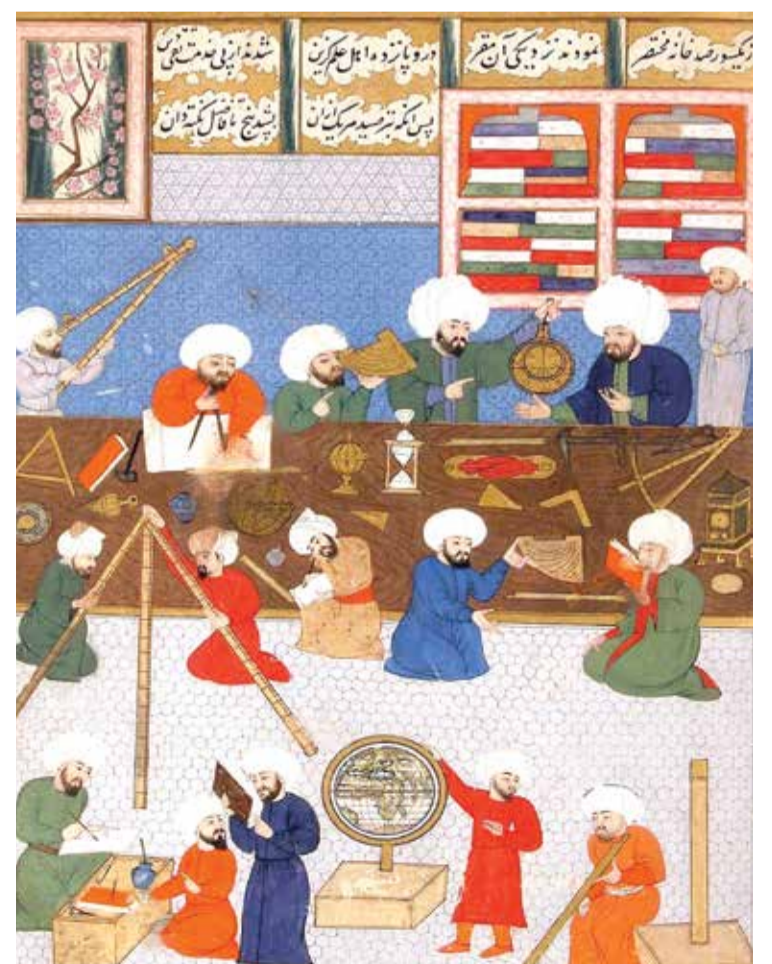
About the book:

Reason, Revelation and Law in Islamic and Western Theory and History

This book engages the diverse meanings and interpretations of Islamic and Western law which have affected people and societies across the globe, past and present, in correlation to the epistemological groundings of those meanings and interpretations. The volume takes a distinctively comparative approach, advancing dialogue on crucial transnational and global debates over the history of Western and Islamic approaches to law, politics and society and their relevance for today. It discusses how fundamental concepts are understood and even translated from one historical or political context or one semantic domain to another. The book provides focused studies of key figures and theories in a manageable, accessible format useful for specialized academic courses and research as well as general audiences.



It's actually the basis of sympathy and empathy that we need in this war, something that is very lacking. It's trying to understand the other side for what they think or feel, and not label them off right from the beginning. Right, and maybe I'll add this: it comes down to how we decide to respond to these kinds of differences and diverse ways of thinking, as it were. These are diverse ways of conceiving divine revelation and natural law that different people have that result in different outcomes that differ from our positions and maybe differ from society's position or the state's political position, whatever it may be. The question is: how do we respond and deal with that? And it's the question of law and justice and of crime and punishment. But there are also the questions: what kind of punishment is appropriate for what kind of crime? How do you define crime? What kind of crime is it? To what degree is it a crime? How severe of a crime is it? Is it a misdemeanor or is it a felony like in the US language, etc.? And then there's the question of the corresponding punishment for that crime. Those are very difficult, important questions. My ultimate question, I think, is: do people deserve death? Is the death penalty called for in what circumstances? And there's a major debate over death penalty. It's very



The drawing shows the 16th century Arab Ottoman polymath Taqī al-Dīn, and other astronomers around him, at the Galata observatory founded in 1557 by Sultan Suleyman, from the *Sehinsahname* of Murad III, c. 1581 (vellum), Turkish School, (16th century). [ISTANBUL UNIVERSITY LIBRARY](https://www.istanbuluniversitylibrary.com)