



The Concert of Civilizations: The Common Roots of Western and Islamic Constitutionalism (Rethinking Political and International Theory)

Jeremy Kleidosty

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Are Western and Islamic political and constitutional ideas truly predestined for civilizational clash? In order to understand this controversy *The Concert of Civilizations* begins by deriving and redefining a definition of constitutionalism that is suitable for comparative, cross-cultural analysis. The rule of law, reflection of national character, and the clear delineation and limitation of governmental power are used as lenses through which thinkers like Cicero, Montesquieu, and the authors of *The Federalist Papers* can be read alongside al-Farabi, ibn Khaldun, and the Ottoman Tanzimat decrees. Bridging the civilizational divide is a chapter comparing the Magna Carta with Muhammad's Constitution of Medina, as both documents can be seen as foundational within their traditions. For the first time in political theory, this text also provides a sustained, detailed analysis of Khayr al-Din al-Tunisi's book *The Surest Path*, which explains his fusion of Muslim and Western ideas in his writing of Tunisia's first modern constitution, which is also the first constitution for a majority-Muslim state. Finally, the book discusses the Arab Spring through a brief overview of the revolutions in Egypt, Libya, and Tunisia, and offers some early thoughts about Tunisia's uniquely successful revolution.

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