A Global History of Ideas in the Language of Law

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Part Three
Legal Concepts and Legal Regimes in a Global History of Ideas

In examining the role of various legal concepts and regimes, we shall consider four equipped with a marked globalization gene that predestines them to play a major part in the global history of ideas. Each concept or regime is to be understood only in the given context:

- Worldwide Enlightenment and universal natural law
- The history of international law as a political history of ideas
- The invention of human rights
- The dynamics of rule-of-law principles

We begin with the Enlightenment and “its” natural law. The Age of the Enlightenment is not only an interesting epoch in the history of ideas: a somewhat more comprehensive consideration of this period can also throw light on the legal concept and regime of natural law, notably with respect to the Enlightenment in the history of communication, institutions, and power. These three aspects also prove fruitful in examining natural law as a “language of politics.”