Premodern Islamic societies stood at a crossroads both in time and in space, temporally between the ancient world and the modern, and spatially in the midst of the civilizations of the oecumene. Recent studies have discovered any number of interesting cases of scientific transmission to and from Islam, which accentuate its critical role in both scientific transmission and transformation over more than a millennium. But another line of argument has played down this role, based on either cultural specificity or else on assumptions of parallel (but independent) development. This talk will explore these alternatives and argue that in fact intercultural scientific transmission, both in the Islamic case and in others, should be seen as more the norm rather than the exception.