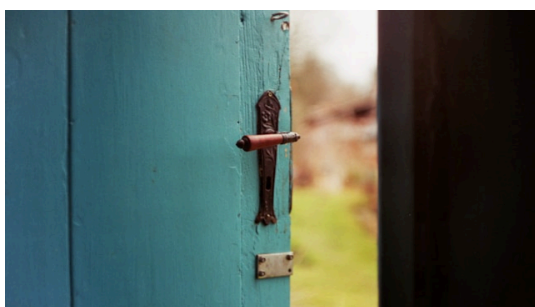


LEGAL HISTORY & LEGAL THEORY

Newsletter of the Max Planck Institute,
July 2025 #90



Opportunities

The **[Doucet Scholarship](#)** offers a funded 3-month research stay (January – March 2026) at the mpilhl. It supports early-career scholars – especially from Latin America – working on the legal history of the Hispanic world, with access to the unique Doucet Collection (4,800+ titles on *derecho indiano*). For more information on the Doucet Collection, see below. **[Deadline 15 September 2025](#)**

Our **[Visitors' Programme](#)** offers three-to-six-month-long scholarships for PhD students, postdocs & senior researchers from outside Germany. Pursue your own project, access top-tier resources & join lively academic exchange. **[Apply now.](#)**



Events

Unless otherwise stated, these are in-person events at the mpilhl.

17 July, 18:15 – 19:45, Salamanca-Kolloquium: *Mit den Augen des anderen? Las Casas' Verteidigung der Völker der Neuen Welt gegen den Humanisten Sepúlveda*, Mariano Delgado. Goethe-University (EIG 1.314)

[more](#)



Max Planck Summer Academy for Legal History 2025

The struggle for law

This week we welcome a new cohort of young scholars to our Summer Academy, a two-week program of seminars, research and debate at the intersection of legal history and theory. Participants will examine how law has been attacked, defended and transformed from abolitionist petitions to postcolonial constitutions, from courtrooms to the streets.

The theme of this year's Academy draws on a provocation by Rudolf von Jhering who wrote in 1872 that "the life of the law is a struggle." For him, law emerged not from consensus but from conflict between states, classes and individuals. It's an idea that still resonates in battles over reparations, decolonization and civil rights.

But is struggle the only force that shapes law? Jhering also called law a "continuous work," a quieter process of negotiation, repair and persistence. This year's Academy invites participants to explore both: the confrontations that bring legal systems to the breaking point and the everyday labor that holds them together.

Alongside [lectures](#) on key methods and debates in legal history, participants will present their own projects, engage in small-group workshops and spend time in one of the world's leading legal history libraries. The goal is to revisit legal struggles of the past and to rethink what it means to do legal history today.

[Read more](#)

New Publications

Kevin Kulp

"Ordained Sinners": A Legal-Historical View on Clerical Abuse in the Middle Ages

Sexual abuse by clergy is not a uniquely modern scandal. Long before today's headlines, the Christian Church was already wrestling with how to respond when those in holy office became the perpetrators. In *Sexueller Kindesmissbrauch und Sodomie im mittelalterlichen Kirchenrecht*, Kevin Kulp sheds light on how medieval Church law addressed such transgressions, offering a detailed legal-historical study that stretches from late antiquity to the Reformation.



This is the fourth volume under the theme *Recht im ersten Jahrtausend*, published as part of the series *Studien zur europäischen Rechtsgeschichte* (Volume 345). Kulp traces how concepts of abuse and sodomy evolved in ecclesiastical law, focusing not only on legal norms but also on the shifting theological and institutional self-image of the Church.

The book reveals a long and conflicted tradition: efforts to define, condemn or conceal abuse were never static but changed alongside the Church's understanding of sin, power and discipline. By mapping this evolution, Kulp's work offers crucial historical depth to a topic that remains painfully current. He argues that understanding these legal traditions, and how they continue to shape Church practice, can help clarify today's debates about accountability and the role of secular law in confronting clerical crimes.

We're taking a short summer break. Just like every year, there will be no newsletter issue in August. We'll be back in September with fresh insights, research highlights and news from our institute. Until then, enjoy the summer and thank you for reading.

Guests and Visiting Scholars

Brum Neto, Benjamin (Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro, Brazil): *The Institution of Nature: Proposing a New Paradigm for Legal Studies in the Anthropocene*, May – October

Faustino Santos, Gabriel (Università degli Studi di Macerata, Italy): *Reimagining Italian legal scholarship through a multidisciplinary perspective: scholars and magistrates at the verge of law and psychiatry in the 1960s and 1970s*, April – September

Forderer, Susi (European University Institute, Badia Fiesolana, Italy): *The principle(s) of Member State equality in an unequal European Union*, June – August

Irazábal Martínez, David Néstor (Universitat Pompeu Fabra, Barcelona, Spain): *Reasoning of judicial decisions in Catalonia in the context of early modern Iberian jurisdictional cultures*, April – September

Knaap, Aden (Yale University, New Haven, CT, USA): *Judging the World*, May – July

Laubenstein, Victor (Tokyo University of Foreign Studies, Japan): *Normative Dialogues or Contractive Colonialism? Assimilation and Rejection of Local Normative Systems in the Early Modern Mission of Japan*, May – July

Laurent, Muriel (Universidad de los Andes, Bogotá, Colombia): *The lawsuits of Remigio Márquez: property, race, honor and identity in the Caribbean New Granada at the end of the Spanish regime*, April – September

Nelde, Anita (Ruprecht-Karls-Universität Heidelberg, Germany): *Methoden des Arbeitsrechts*, June – November

Parron, Tâmis (Universidade Federal Fluminense, Brazil): *Liberty and Power: Constitutions, Slavery, and the Origins of Our Times (c. 1780-c. 1830)*, June 2025 – February 2026

Reis Siqueira Freire, Alexandre (Universidade Nove de Julho, São Paulo, Brazil): *Digitization of society between private digital rationality and public standards of rights protection: a theoretical and comparative study of the horizontal effectiveness of fundamental rights*, February – August

Renninger, Philipp (University of Arizona, Tucson, USA): *The Case for the Code: Methods and Schools of Modern Chinese Jurisprudence & Autocratic Jurisprudence: Lessons from China's Legal Academy*, June – July

Wang, Zhiqiang (Fudan University Law School, Shanghai, China): *China and Beyond: A Shift of Approach from Judicature to Governance*, March – August

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