In This Issue

This issue of *Law and History Review* opens with an article that was part of the American Society for Legal History (ASLH) inaugural preconference workshop in Miami. In it, Nara Milanich uses the passage of the Law of Filiation in Chile in 1999 to explore the connections among family law, democracy, and social citizenship in Latin America. As that suggests, Milanich's article is a microhistory that makes a much larger claim: if we look closely at Chile's efforts to reform this piece of family law, we can understand the relationship among class politics, social citizenship, and family law throughout Latin America.

The next two articles move us away from twentieth-century Latin America to let us explore English law across several centuries. Richard Ross begins that tour with a study that looks at how Protestants in early modern England constructed arguments about when and why Christians were bound to obey human law. The question, as Ross notes, was a significant one, with implications for civil rulers and their claims to sovereign power, but Ross's point is not simply to demonstrate the role of religious theory in shaping early modern constitutional principles. His article demonstrates that early modern English Protestant theorists framed and then sharpened their arguments about legal obligations in a century-long engagement with the ideas of Spanish Thomists.

In the next article, Simon Devereaux looks at the roles William Wilberforce played in late eighteenth century efforts to reform penal practices in England. Devereaux's article introduces us to an aspect of Wilberforce's life that is often lost in our focus on his efforts to abolish the slave trade. But again, the smaller story tells a larger tale: to understand Wilbeforce's efforts to reform capital punishment, Devereaux argues, we must rethink our understanding of the ruling elite's attitudes toward the death penalty in late eighteenth century England and modify our understanding of the aims of English humanitarian reformers in that period.

The next article, by Wolfgang Mueller, moves us far away from England and the criminal courts of Devereaux's study, to the canon law of the late Middle Ages. Mueller asks whether historians are correct to assert that canon law in that period distinguished between a *forum internum*, or

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inner forum where penitents could confess sins in secrecy to priests, and the *forum externum* where breaches of canon law were dealt with publicly. Mueller uses a close study of the records of a particular court, the Apostolic Court of Penance, to argue against a historiographical consensus. He suggests that the records of the Court of Penance reveal no sharp distinction between the *forum internum* and the *forum externum* in the late Middle Ages.

Mueller's study of the canon law treatment of marital disputes is followed by Francesca Trivellato's examination of the legal treatment of maritime wrecks in the seventeenth century. Using a shipwreck off the coast of France in 1627 as a starting point, Trivellato uses the law of wreck to reveal the legal pluralism of Old Regime Europe. Tracing the competing legal claims that arose from that wreck, Trivellato reveals the effect legal pluralism had on sovereigns' efforts to establish power within their territory and on European attempts to expand overseas.

We stay with the subject of legal pluralism in our next article, by Nurfadzilah Yahaya. Here, the story is how the legal pluralism of the Straits of Malacca came to an end. Yahaya also uses a single case, actually a series of trials involving a local merchant, from the early nineteenth century, to show how the East India Company was able to expand its power in the region by drawing clients, and ultimately local sovereigns, into the jurisdiction of the Company's commercial court. Yahaya shows that by using law as a colonizing force, the EIC was able to change the very structures of power in the Straits.

The final article in this issue, by Paul Sabin, argues that in the 1970s, well before the Reagan administration made its mark by denouncing government, liberal environmental lawyers posed a challenge to government power. Looking behind the rise of regulations and administrative agencies typically associated with the environmental movement, Sabin identifies a new, skeptical liberalism that animated environmental reformers, giving rise to public interest lawyers and "'extra-governmental efforts' to modify 'government behavior.'" The result, Sabin argues, was a liberal challenge to the political and economic assumptions of the New Deal order.

This issue concludes with a selection of book reviews. We invite readers to also consider American Society for Legal History's electronic discussion list, H-Law, and visit the Society's website at http://www.legalhistorian.org/. Readers may also be interested in viewing the journal online, at http://journals.cambridge.org/LHR, where they may read and search issues of the journal.

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