

# COMMON LAWS

## XXth Annual Forum of Young Legal Historians

Cambridge, 2–5 April 2014

### Call for Papers

2014 will mark not only twenty years of Annual Forums organised by the Association of Young Legal Historians, but also the first time an Annual Forum has been held in a common law jurisdiction. As such, the theme of the XXth Annual Forum—‘common laws’—invites attention both to the common law legal tradition, and also to the recurrent themes of legal commonality, harmonisation and integration that have been a feature of the Association’s Annual Forums over the past two decades.

The common law is above all a system built on the accumulation of case law over time. This provides rich materials for legal historians, whether in the form of contextualised case studies, the identification and critique of ‘leading cases’, or an analysis of changing patterns of case law and litigation across history. Case law is, however, by no means unique to the common law tradition. Judicial decisions play a leading role in mixed systems like Scots law, and even in codified civilian systems large domains of the law have historically been the product of case law rather than legislation; administrative law in France being one notable example. In addition to presentations on the history of the common law itself, the organisers therefore also welcome presentations addressing case law, case studies, and ‘leading cases’ in all legal systems and across all periods of history.

‘Common law’ can, of course, be understood in more than one sense. In particular, neither the United Kingdom nor the University of Cambridge are isolated from the tradition of the *ius commune*. English common law is, of course, not the only system of law operating within the UK; and Roman civil law is to this day a foundational aspect of the legal curriculum at the University of Cambridge. In particular, the Regius Professorship of Civil Law has since its establishment in 1540 served as a focus for teaching and research in Roman law in Cambridge. The organisers therefore welcome presentations addressing the *ius commune* and the common inheritance of Roman civil law.

Finally, the forum’s theme invites attention to the idea of commonality across legal systems. Within Europe, the EU has served as an obvious focal point for legal harmonisation, as have wider international organisations such as UNIDROIT, UNCITRAL, or the Hague Conference on Private International Law. At the level of individual states, points of commonality—especially in the field of legislation—can be found in places as diverse as Germany and Japan, or Switzerland and Turkey. Each of these efforts at harmonisation and commonality has a history, and the organisers therefore also invite presentations that address this theme.



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Presentations may be given in any major language, but the organisers advise that English-language presentations are likely to receive the widest audience.

Intending presenters are encouraged to send an application consisting of an abstract in either English or French (not more than 350 words), and a brief *curriculum vitae* to [forum2014@aylh.org](mailto:forum2014@aylh.org) before **31 January 2014**.

The conference fee will be £70 for presenters, and £85 for others.

Further information about the Association of Young Legal Historians and past Annual Forums can be found at [www.aylh.org](http://www.aylh.org)

We look forward to welcoming you to Cambridge next spring.

James McComish  
Jacob Currie  
Astron Douglas  
Philip Murray  
Joe Sampson  
Andreas Televantos

*Organisers*



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