

An update on the Radcliffe Alumnae Professorship and Fellowship

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Subject: An update on the Radcliffe Alumnae Professorship and Fellowship
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In the midst of another lively semester at the Radcliffe Institute, I am reminded of all of the generous donors who make our full schedule of scholarly and artistic exploration possible. This spring, I am particularly grateful for the support of over 1,000 Radcliffe alumnae and friends, including you, who have contributed to the Radcliffe Alumnae Professorship and the Radcliffe Alumnae Fellowship here at the Institute. In the years since they were established, these funds have provided opportunities for extraordinary scholars to do their best work with the protected time, space, and resources of the Radcliffe Institute. And this year has been no exception.

As you may recall, the [Radcliffe Professorship Program](#) helps Harvard to recruit the best, most diverse faculty by providing exceptional individuals with the chance to spend two of their first five years on the Harvard faculty as Radcliffe Fellows. During these fellowship years, Radcliffe Professors strengthen their careers while feeding their intellectual curiosity with deep work on their own projects and frequent opportunities to interact with leading thinkers across all disciplines. The current Radcliffe Alumnae Professor, legal historian Tamar Herzog, is in the midst of completing her first of two fellowship years here at the Institute. Tamar has enthusiastically seized her time as a Radcliffe Fellow to take a new approach to her work. You can read about her current project, which focuses on European legal history, and her experience as the Radcliffe Alumnae Professor in residence at the Institute in the report below.

In addition to this update on Tamar, I am delighted to share more good news. Cynthia Dwork, currently a Distinguished Scientist at Microsoft Research in Silicon Valley, will join us at the Radcliffe Institute in January 2017 as a Radcliffe Alumnae Professor, to serve concurrently with Tamar. Cynthia will also serve as the Gordon McKay Professor of Computer Science at the Harvard Paulson School of Engineering and Applied Sciences. You can read more about Cynthia and her many contributions to her field [here](#). We are delighted that, with your support, the Radcliffe Institute was able to help Harvard recruit such an accomplished and esteemed computer scientist to the University at a time of surging student interest in the field.

Along with a new Radcliffe Alumnae Professor, we will also welcome a new Radcliffe Alumnae Fellow. Marine Denolle, recently appointed Assistant Professor at the Radcliffe Institute and Assistant Professor of Earth and Planetary Sciences in the Faculty of Arts and Sciences, will spend one year as a fellow at the Institute while serving as an Assistant Professor. Marine will be able to spend large swaths of time developing her scholarship in the interdisciplinary community of scholars and artists in Radcliffe Yard. By providing this rare and valuable opportunity for exceptional junior faculty members, Radcliffe Assistant Professorships are helping to attract the "brightest beginners" to the University, as one Harvard dean noted. This program dovetails perfectly with the Radcliffe Alumnae Fellowship, which always supports an untenured member of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences. I look forward to writing to you again with updates on both Cynthia and Marine in the coming years.

All of us at the Institute are so happy to have Tamar here as the Radcliffe Alumnae Professor and to have both Cynthia and Marine joining the ranks of remarkable Radcliffe scholars. Thank you for helping to make it all possible through your generosity. On that note, I am glad to announce that the Radcliffe Campaign, Invest in Ideas, continues to make good progress. Donors have now contributed over 75 percent of our \$70 million goal. With your support, we will ensure that this vibrant and creative community thrives far into the future.

With gratitude and warm regards,
Matt

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Tamar Herzog

Radcliffe Alumnae Professor 2015-16



I am a legal historian who is keen on comprehending how legal structures affect the way we interact with the world. Rather than searching to reconstruct the rules or their philosophical underpinning, by observing what 'ordinary' people do I reconstruct their understanding of the rules as well as how this understanding affects what they chose to do and how. Taking this methodology to the early modern period (mostly sixteenth to the early nineteenth century) and to Spain and Portugal and their overseas domains, I had asked, for example, how people imagined their relationship to the community. When did they become members of a local community and how, when did they recognize this condition in their neighbors and what did this condition imply. I equally explored what being a Spaniard meant and how it was negotiated, mainly, in order to make claims to rights. Using a similar angle, I asked how communities made claim to territories, and how borders were formed as a result in both Europe and the Americas.

This year at Radcliffe, I took a somewhat different path. Instead of doing primary archival research as I have done in my previous five books, I am in the process of completing a manuscript on European legal history. The book begins with ancient Roman law and ends with the formation of the European Union. Its aim is to introduce the non-specialists to the development of law over time, mainly, how law was defined, who made and changed it, and how it was interpreted. Rather than looking at particular legal arrangements, for example, at how contracts have evolved, I wish to observe law as a phenomenon, and argue that what we understand as normative and where norms come from has dramatically changed over time. My exploration of Europe also includes the European colonial expansion, which was important to the development of law.

My work mainly seeks to change the way we understand the past. It questions deeply rooted convictions, demonstrating that many were based on assumptions too quickly taken or on anachronistic reading of the past. Much of history was written in order to support and justify the emergence of nation states in the nineteenth and twentieth century. History was also influenced by a positivist turn allowing historians to point proudly to primary (historical) sources as a justification to their conclusions. I believe that if we abandoned the teleological narratives that the past "necessarily" led to the present and instead imagine the past on its own terms, if we de-nationalize history, and if we re-interpreted archival sources as including claims rather than facts, we would do a better job at understanding not only what had transpired, but also who we are.

My work on communal membership, for example, sought to demonstrate that Spanishness was a legal category long before it became a national category. Mainly aimed at vindicating rights (such as the right to travel and trade in the New World), it was based not on religious loyalties, or fidelity to the king as it has been customarily argued, but instead on the insertion of individuals in local communities. It was through local citizenship that people who were said to be integrated in municipalities were also recognized as Spaniards. My work on territorial formation sought to emphasize that border conflicts were endemic among neighbors, whether they belonged to the same polity or not. Often, the nearer communities were, the more social and family contacts their members had, the more likely they were to disagree or even engage in violence. The aim here was to transform what was seen as conflict among states to conflict among individuals and disprove the common assumption that social relations end rather than explain rivalry.

During this year at the Institute, I started writing the book on European legal history from scratch. I presently have a complete first draft, which I am in the process of revising. I am a professor at Harvard and continued this year collaborating as before with some of my colleagues here and elsewhere. In some ways, collaboration was intensified, because as I am writing a book

that often leads me outside my 'comfort zone,' I have requested a few colleagues to read chapters that are in their field of expertise and give me their opinion. Many have generously agreed. This had been a great experience and I am very grateful. My project also evolved because of interaction with other Radcliffe fellows. I had a few very good conversations with several among them, and having to present my work was helpful too. As a Radcliffe Fellow, I mostly appreciated the free time and the vicinity to amazing libraries with extremely helpful staff. I also enjoyed the talks by other fellows.