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Chronicle of Legal Historical Events in Germany in 2016

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January

On January 19th, a very interesting lecture was held in the Max Planck Institute for European Legal History. Dr. Max Deardorff was talking about “The Tightening Vise of Christian Citizenship: Converts from Islam and the Law in Sixteenth Century Granada.” His lecture concerned the consequences of the Spanish Civil War between 1568 and 1570 and in particular the conditions of letting the converts from Islam to Christianity, taking part in the past rebellion, back to the Spanish society.

February

On February 12th, the Humboldt University in Berlin organised a short colloquium concerning “alternative jurisdictions” (Alternative Gerichtsbarkeiten). The three speakers: Kamila Staudigl-Ciechowicz from the University of Vienna, Moritz Renner from Bremen and Daniel Siemens from Bielefeld discussed forms of jurisdiction independent from the state, such as disciplinary jurisdiction of universities and the roots of international arbitrary jurisdiction.

March

Between March 17th and 18th, the University of Regensburg organised a conference “The ADHGB from 1861 as a General Source of Commercial Law in Europe of the Middle Ages” (Das ADHGB von 1861 als Gemeinsames Obligationenrecht in Mitteleuropa). Prof. Dr. Martin Löhning and his post-doc researcher Stephan Wagner hosted this conference in order to explore the influence of the pan-German act, considered to be a model case of legal harmonization of the 19th century. The participants, coming from universities all around Europe, held lectures about how ADHGB influenced the commercial law in their countries in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

April

On April 7th and 8th, a workshop titled “The Legitimization of Private and Public Private Regulation. Past and Present” was held in the Max Planck Institute. The lecturers presented several examples of non-state and semi-state self-regulations functioning within the borders of state law, e.g., self-regulations of universities, labour legislations between France and Belgium or the Fascist Party in Italy, and discussed the ways of their legitimization.

May

On the May 25th, the Max Planck Institute for European Legal History organised a workshop titled “Cartography and the Use of Sources. When the Historian’s Work Does Not Involve Writing and Is Not Limited to Illustrations”. Dr. Micol Ferrara presented cases in which analysis of written sources *sensu stricto* and the study of illustrations is not enough – a more interdisciplinary study is required from a legal historian. For example, when it comes to situating the buildings or reconstructing the itineraries even a three dimensional analysis is needed. The lecturer concentrated on 3 fields of using cartography, all of them connected with the city of Rome in the modern age:

The area of the Jewish ghetto;

The organisation of urban space in general;

The space of conversion (concerning the treatment of Jews and Muslims).

June

Between June 1st and 3rd, a conference on “Organising Justice: China and Europe from the 15th to the Early 20th Century” took place in the Max Planck Institute for European Legal History. The organisers aimed to discuss the newest developments in the field of comparative European and Chinese legal history as well as consider the possible dimensions of future comparative studies.

July

Between July 18th and the 29th, the annual Max Planck Summer Academy of Legal History took place. The initiative was intended for highly motivated, early-stage legal history researchers (mostly Ph.D. candidates) and provided an introduction to the most useful research methods as well as some basic knowledge about formation and transformation of law throughout history. The 2016 academy’s main topic was “multinormativity.”

September

Between September 22nd and 24th, the German section of the IVR [Internationale Vereinigung für Rechts- und Sozialphilosophie] organised a conference on “Theory in Law vs. Theories About Law” (Theorie im Recht – Theorie über das Recht), which took place in Bremen. Participants analysed where the difference between the two types of theories lay, as well as their evolution throughout history. They discussed the origins of some legal expressions, tried to present the law from different perspectives, and covered the principles of “making legal science”.

October

On October 20th and 21st, the University of Regensburg organised a debate entitled “Unborn Children of Liberalism? Civil Lawmaking in Central Europe of the Interbellum” (“Nichtgeborene Kinder des Liberalismus? – Zivilgesetzgebung im Mitteleuropa der Zwischenkriegszeit”). The title of the conference was a reference to Franz Wieacker’s expression, “The Late Child of Liberalism”, according to the German BGB. Participants represented universities from countries that gained independence after World War I, presenting how those countries attempted to restore their original legal order and adapt the anachronistic laws to the new reality.

November

On November 3rd, the Max Planck Institute for European Legal History and Institute for the History of Science organised a workshop devoted to “Practical and Pragmatic Literature in Legal and Science History.”

Participants’ lectures were presented within 5 modules:

Using practical and pragmatic literature in the frame of the historiography and history of science and legal history;

What is practical and pragmatic literature? Examples from the research activity;

What is the epistemic value of our research for the understanding of the process of evolution of knowledge? Examples and reflections concerning our approach to historical sources (diffusion and emergence of new knowledge, stability and mutability);

What is practical and pragmatic character in our historical sources? The relation between theory and practice;

Practical and pragmatic literature and “convivencia”: the genre and its peculiar use especially in “areas of contacts.”

December

On December 2nd, the 2nd annual debate of the Max Planck Institute’s initiative „History of Labor Law” (Arbeitsrechtsgeschichte) took place. Participants focused on labour law and lawmaking during World War I.