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Chronicle of Research in Legal and Constitutional History in Serbia in 2016

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XXII Annual Forum of Young Legal Historians

The highlight of 2016 for legal historians in Serbia was the XXII Annual Forum of Young Legal Historians, which was hosted by the Faculty of Law of the University of Belgrade. This conference is organised every year by the Association of Young Legal Historians – a network of young researchers which was started under the patronage of the Max Planck Institute for European Legal History in 1992. Over the years, the Association has organised 22 Forums, which have been hosted by a variety of different Universities.

The XXII Annual Forum was organised from 6th to 8th May 2016, under the title: “History of Legal Sources: The Changing Structure of Law”. The event attracted a large number of international participants, mostly from Europe, but also from other parts of the world.

The Forum focused on the history of legal sources, the development of the structure of legal sources, and the changing understanding of legal sources in different historical and social contexts. Participants’ presentations covered a wide range of subjects and historical periods, from ancient law (Greek and Roman), through mediaeval and early modern law, to contemporary issues of the sources of EU law.

In addition to being a valuable scientific exchange, the Forum included social events and excursions to some of the most important historical heritage sites in Serbia.

The General Assembly of the Association of Young Legal Historians decided that the XXIII Annual Forum will be organised at the University of Naples – Federico II in 2017.

170th Anniversary of the Serbian Civil Code

On 25th May 2016 the Faculty of Law of the University of Belgrade organised a conference dedicated to the 170th Anniversary of the Serbian Civil Code of 1844. The Serbian Civil Code was the central source and focal point of the development of civil law in Serbia in the period from 1844 to 1941. The Civil Code was abrogated in 1946, but it remains important, not only as a monument of Serbian legal history, but also as a source of rules for those questions of civil law which are not specifically regulated in contemporary statutes.

This conference had a special significance because a draft of a new Civil Code was proposed in 2015. The participants, therefore, discussed the rules and the system of the old Civil Code in light of the proposed Civil Code and in connection with current issues in civil law theory and practice.

The conference was attended by scholars from Serbia and Croatia. Research which was presented at the Conference was published in the form of collected papers dedicated to the 170th Anniversary of the Serbian Civil Code.

Collected Papers in Memory of Alexander Soloviev

In 2016 the Faculty of Law of the University of Belgrade published a collection of articles dedicated to the prominent legal historian Alexander Soloviev (1890–1971), who established the study of Slavic legal history and comparative legal history at the University of Belgrade.

Alexander Soloviev was one of the most prominent members of the Russian émigré population in Belgrade. He was a professor of the Faculty of Law of the University of Belgrade from 1920 to 1946. He was the founder and first dean of the Faculty of Law of the University of Sarajevo (1947–1951). Due to political persecution, he was forced to leave Yugoslavia in 1951 and he spent the rest of his life in Geneva, where he worked at the University of Geneva as a professor of Slavic languages and Russian literature and translated the collected works of Dostoyevsky and Tolstoy to French.

During his teaching career at the University of Belgrade, Alexander Soloviev wrote extensively about the legal history of Slavic peoples. The main focus of his work was Serbian mediaeval law, but he also wrote about mediaeval law in Montenegro, Bosnia, Dubrovnik, Bulgaria and Russia. His commentary on the legislation of Emperor Dušan (XIV c.), *The Code of Tzar Stefan Dusan*, remains the most detailed and authoritative text on this subject. This book was published posthumously in 1980 by the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts.

The collected papers in memory of Alexander Soloviev contain articles which were presented in 2015 at a conference which was organised at the Faculty of Law of the University of Belgrade to mark the 125th anniversary of Alexander Soloviev's birth. Scholars from Russia, Poland, Italy, Croatia, and Serbia took part in this important scientific gathering.