

———— MAX PLANCK PARTNER GROUP ————

**The Production of Knowledge of Normativity and the
Early Modern Book Trade**

2ND MEETING

Knowledge of Normativity and Printing Technologies. Networks, Authenticity, Typographic Devices

University of
Barcelona
19-20 June
2025



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The Production of Knowledge of Normativity and the Early Modern Book Trade

2ND MEETING

This two-day workshop hosts the second meeting of the Max Planck Partner Group “The Production of Knowledge of Normativity and the Early Modern Book Trade”. The aim of the group members' joint research is to investigate the extent to which – following the emergence of the early modern book trade – the production, circulation and consumption of legal books had an impact on the production of knowledge of normativity. We examine this topic by combining, in an interdisciplinary way, the questions and methods of legal history, book history and the history of knowledge. In this, we understand legal history as a part of the history of knowledge, a perspective long adopted by historians of science who emphasize the interdependence between ideas and the social and material context of their formation. Applying this perspective to legal history will help highlight the specific ways in which knowledge of normativity was produced in the early modern period, through an analysis of the materiality and sociality of law books—factors that, at that historical juncture, contributed to the emergence of the first truly global book market. In this workshop, the group members will particularly focus on the three following topics: “Spaces and Networks” looking at the international exchange, the circulation of people and normative books, and the networks that made these circulations possible; on the interplay between “Authenticity, Authorship and Authority” of and over normative books; and on “Printing Technologies and Typographic Devices”.

Program

Day One - 19.06.2025

Sala de Juntas - Faculty of Information and Audiovisual Media, University of Barcelona

15:00 - 15:30

Manuela Bragagnolo (University of Trento/M. PILHLT, Frankfurt a. M.) **Pedro Rueda Ramírez** (Universitat de Barcelona), *Introduction*

15:30 - 16:30

Pedro Rueda Ramírez (University of Barcelona), *Manuals, Forms, and Other Practical Works for Notaries and Scribes in Circulation in the Spanish Indies (16th-17th Centuries)*

Commentator: **Alberto Campillo Pardo** (University of Oslo)

16:30 - 17:30

Manuela Bragagnolo (University of Trento/M. PILHLT, Frankfurt a. M.), *Networks of Authorial Control. The Author, his Trade Agents, and the Production of Normative Knowledge in the Early Modern Times*

Commentator: **Marius Buning** (University of Oslo)

17:30 - 18:00

Coffee Break

18:00 - 19:00

Yoshimi Orii (Keio University, Tokyo), *Mission, Printing, and Universalization: Organizing various Debates on the Historical Significance of Japanese Jesuit Letterpress Printing*

Commentator: **Gastón García** (Universidad Nacional de La Plata, La Plata)

19:00 - 19:30

Théo Fraslin (University of Oslo), *Privileges and cartography in Enlightenment France*

Introduction: **Manuela Bragagnolo** (University of Trento/MPILHLT, Frankfurt a. M.)

Day Two - 20.06.2025

Sala de Juntas - Faculty of Information and Audiovisual Media, University of Barcelona

10:00 - 11:00

Natalia Maillard Álvarez (Universidad Pablo de Olavide, Sevilla), *The Portonariis and the Production and Distribution of Law Books in the 16th Century*

Commentators: **Christiane Birr** (MPILHLT, Frankfurt a. M.), **Polina Solonets** (MPILHLT, Frankfurt a. M.)

11:00 - 12:00

Andrea Ottone (University of Oslo), *Asserting Authorship through Censorship: Martín Alfonso de Vivaldo's "Candelabrum Aureum" (1588-1606)*

Commentator: **Manuela Bragagnolo** (University of Trento/MPILHLT, Frankfurt a. M.)

12:00 - 12:30

Coffee Break

12:30 - 13:30

Renaud Milazzo (Rome, Venerable English College), *Standardisation of Knowledge and Material Evidence in Books Published in Antwerp, Lyon and Venice in the 16th Century*

Commentators: **Piotr Alexandrowicz** (Adam Mickiewicz University, Poznań); **Rafael Mandressi** (Centre Alexandre Koyré-EHESS, Paris)

13:30 - 14:00

Concluding Remarks

14:00 - 14:30

Discussion about the collective volume and next steps

14:30

Lunch

17:00

Visit Barcelona Bar Association Library (ICAB)

Abstracts

Pedro Rueda Ramírez

Manuals, Forms, and Other Practical Books for Notaries and Scribes in Circulation in the Spanish Indies (16th-17th Centuries)

The booksellers and merchants who sent books to the territories of the Spanish Crown in Latin America included practical books aimed at notaries and scribes, such as the “*Práctica civil y criminal e instrucción de escribanos*” by Gabriel de Monterroso y Alvarado. In other cases, these professionals, when traveling to perform their duties, carried some of these works with them, forming professional libraries tailored to their trades, or, after obtaining a notary position, they bought the appropriate books for their library and ordered them from Europe to have a selection of texts suitable for their professional activities.

These writing professionals needed pragmatic manuals to resolve numerous legal matters with assurance. The works, in vernacular languages, were highly valued by secretarial officials, office notaries, public notaries, and apostolic notaries, who needed tools to guide them in their activities. These works were used in both civil and ecclesiastical administration and were commonly and routinely consulted to apply and adapt regulations to the specific practices of the American territories. Examples are *Práctica de visitas y residencias* (Naples, 1696) by Pedro Pérez Landero Otáñez y Castro, a notary in Lima, and *Política de escripturas* (Mexico, 1605) by Nicolás de Yrolo.

Manuela Bragagnolo

Networks of Authorial Control. The Author, his Trade Agents, and the Production of Normative Knowledge in the Early Modern Times

Printing laws and normative books, be it secular or religious normativity, often was subjected to special attention of the authorities. Originally conceived to protect the printers' economic investment, printing privileges provided a creative tool to set up new control systems. Recent scholarship shows, for instance, that granting privileges to a printer was a way the French crown adopted control over the circulation of the first printed royal decrees. Moreover, granting privileges to authors allowed the papacy to ensure the doctrinal correctness of legal and theological texts.

Printing privileges granted the beneficiary the exclusive right to print and sell a certain book. Privileged authors could therefore choose the printer and control not only the production process, but also the selling of the book.

How could authors control the selling of their books? And why would they do so? Which practices were put in place to perform these types of control? And what did this entail to be an author of a normative text in the early modern period? Working on the case of Martín de Azpilcueta's “*Manual de Confessores*”, the paper aims to understand the control strategies set up by the author to control the selling of the “*Manual*” at a global scale. In particular, the paper aims to explore the author's role in the publishing industry by

tracing and analyzing the network of selling agents he entrusted with selling the books.

The starting point of the analysis will be some material evidence – mostly signatures – on individual copies of Azpilcueta's “*Manual*” held by various European and South American libraries. The hypothesis is that this material evidence on physical copies had the goal of ensuring a certified circulation of editions checked and supervised by the author himself.

The paper places Azpilcueta's case in the framework of other practices of signing physical copies of normative books as a way to ensure a certified circulation. It offers an analysis of the network of Azpilcueta's agents (as far as they have been yet identified) and looks at possible connections between the printers chosen by Azpilcueta and his selling agents. The overall aim is to better understand Azpilcueta's control strategy in the production and the distribution of his book.

Yoshimi Orii

Mission, Printing, and Universalization: Organizing Various Debates on the Historical Significance of Japanese Jesuit Letterpress Printing

The Jesuits brought the European printing press to Japan for the first time in 1590. This was at a time when woodblock printing technology of Chinese origin, mainly for Buddhist scriptures, was being commercialized and the publishing culture was just beginning to flourish. If the Jesuits had aimed to accommodate themselves to the local culture, they would have adopted xylographic printing technology. The reason why they did not do so, besides the fact of the persecution before changing their method, is that the Western book production technology with cast typefaces has the essential character of being oriented towards universalization, discarding various differences and diversities of hand engraving and countless variants in the same ideograms, thus creating normativity. This has been actively advocated by Japanese linguists in recent years, and in this presentation, I would like to discuss the validity of these arguments by contrasting them with European and American examples.

Andrea Ottone

Asserting Authorship through Censorship: Martín Alfonso de Vivaldo's “Candelabrum Aureum” (1588-1606)

“Texts, books, and discourses really began to have authors (other than mythical, sacralized and sacralizing figures) to the extent that authors became subject to punishment.” This famous line by Michel Foucault owes part of its success to the provocative claim that, at some point in history, authors and censors may have formed an ideal alliance to induce the ontological actuality of authors. Foucault's assertion may be somewhat disorienting to readers with a liberal upbringing, but would it have had the same effect in the early modern period?

This paper shows how the Spanish theologian Martín Alfonso de Valdivia proactively used Roman censorship to control the uniformity and correctness of reprints of his “Candelabrum aureum”, a manual of sacramental theology first published in 1588. This case illustrates how, thanks to the reorganisation of Vatican institutions in the late sixteenth century, Catholic authors had an alternative to book privilege to assert their authority over their texts. It further argues that the interest and ability that authors gained to legally assert authorship over their works gained momentum in the context of the politics of textual control fostered by the post-Tridentine Catholic Church.

Renaud Milazzo

Standardisation of Knowledge and Material Evidence in Books Published in Antwerp, Lyon and Venice in the 16th Century

The aim of this study is to explore the material evidence of civil law books in the 16th century, a pivotal period in the history of printing and legal culture. Far from being mere text carriers, these books embody a complex normativity, expressed through editorial and typographical choices that reveal as much about their content as about their reception and use.

Through a meticulous analysis of title pages, formats, illustrations, layouts and typefaces, this study sheds light on the strategies deployed by publishers and jurists to legitimize and disseminate legal norms. Title pages, for example, are veritable visual manifestos, combining authority, erudition and market appeal. Format choices reflect practical or symbolic uses: small formats for itinerant practitioners contrast with the imposing volumes reserved to learned libraries of the great dynasties of jurists.

Illustrations and page layouts reflect the intent to visually organize legal thought, making the text more accessible or reinforcing its magisterial character. Finally, typefaces - their style, size and organization - are part of an aesthetic that dialogues with the handwritten tradition while affirming the new possibilities offered by printing.

By studying these material elements, the aim is to rethink the normativity of legal works beyond their textual content, by exploring the way in which the book itself - as an object - becomes a vector of norms. This work takes an interdisciplinary approach, bringing together the history of law, the history of books, the history of art and semiology, and the history of economics, to examine the role of material supports in the dissemination and legitimization of legal knowledge.

Natalia Maillard Álvarez

The Portonariis and the Production and Distribution of Law books in the 16th century

The Portonariis were a family of booksellers, printers and publishers who, starting from the Piedmont region, spread throughout Italy, France and Spain. Between the 15th and 17th centuries different members of the family can be found established in Italy (Trino and Venice), France (Avignon and Lyon), and Spain (Salamanca, Medina del Campo, Seville and Zaragoza). At the same time, their business networks exten-

ded to the Low Countries in Europe and to Mexico and Peru in the Americas. They played an especially important role in the Spanish typographic industry of the 16th century, largely renewed by Andrea de Portonariis in Salamanca.

A very significant part of their production (as printers or editors) consisted of law books, especially in Lyon and Salamanca. However, they deployed different strategies depending on the center in which they were located. For instance, in Lyon, up to a 70% of the books linked to the Portonariis were law books, while in Venice it was around 40% and in Trino just over 10%. The legal works printed in Lyon were intended primarily for the international market. The production of legal works in Salamanca, led mainly by Andrea de Portonariis, had a very different character: they were fundamentally works by Spanish authors, intended for the Iberian and American markets. “Las Siete Partidas”, the most important book of Castilian law, printed in 1555 by Andrea de Portonariis, was indeed one of the peaks of the Salamanca printing workshops, and it was thanks to this edition that he earned the title of Royal Typographer.

This paper aims to explore the role of the Portonariis family in the production and distribution of law books in Europe and Latin America, with a particular focus on the strategies they deployed and the networks they created to carry out their business.

Théo Frasin

Privileges and Cartography in Enlightenment France

By the mid-16th century, the Royal Chancellery had become the sole authority in France with the power to grant privileges to authors, booksellers and printers. Granting a privilege was primarily a legal measure of economic protection. However, from the mid-17th to the end of the 18th century, this power was shared with other authorities, such as the Royal Academy of Sciences in Paris, the Royal Academy of Music, and the Depository of Maps and Plans of the Marine, each of these institutions having different reasons for granting or cancelling privileges based on their own field of expertise. While this enabled applicants to request privileges based on non-economic arguments, it also created a situation in which the authority of each institution could be undermined by the others. This talk focuses on the conflicts between these authorities regarding the granting of printing privileges for maps, which contained highly sensitive geographical information for political, military, administrative and scientific reasons. Through case studies involving these different interests, it will highlight the processes and arguments involved in granting such privileges, depending on the institution. Ultimately, the talk aims to reveal how the privilege system was used differently by various authorities to control the production and dissemination of scientific knowledge.



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The Production of Knowledge
of Normativity and the Early
Modern Book Trade

MAX PLANCK INSTITUTE
FOR LEGAL HISTORY
AND LEGAL THEORY



Políticas editoriales

Interferencias
y circulación del libro
culturales
en el Atlántico hispánico

Grant ID2023-148288NB-I00, funded by
MICIU/AEI/10.13039/501100011033/
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Facultat d'Informació
i Mitjans Audiovisuals

Grup de recerca consolidat
«Cultura, Biblioteques i Continguts
Digitals (CBCD)» (SGR-2021-00282)



Design: www.CarolGarciaelBusto.com

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