



Legal History Highlights

June 2025 #16

The newsletter from the department "[Historical Regimes of Normativity](#)" at the Max Planck Institute for Legal History and Legal Theory highlights what we are doing every month.

Project of the Month



Colonial Concessions in Tunisia Under the French Rule: 1860 and 1900

At the core of property and sovereignty quarrels as well as in debates on land reform and the history of international economic law, this study examines concessions through a legal historical lens. In Tunisia, the narrative of concessions is at the intersection of public land reforms and an extraterritorial governance which was namely the protectorate embedded in a foreign investments policy on the markets of the periphery. The reservoir of public land grantable depended on public land reforms undertaken, and these were exclusively granted to foreign corporations. This process led not only to the expansion of territoriality but also to the control of the colonial state over land and its resources. The project shows the centrality of concessions to the economic domination that was characteristic of the French administration extraterritorial policy in Tunisia. This stood in

stark opposition to the neighboring country Algeria, where an initial straightforward conquest of sovereignty took place.

Wafa Ben Mahmoud

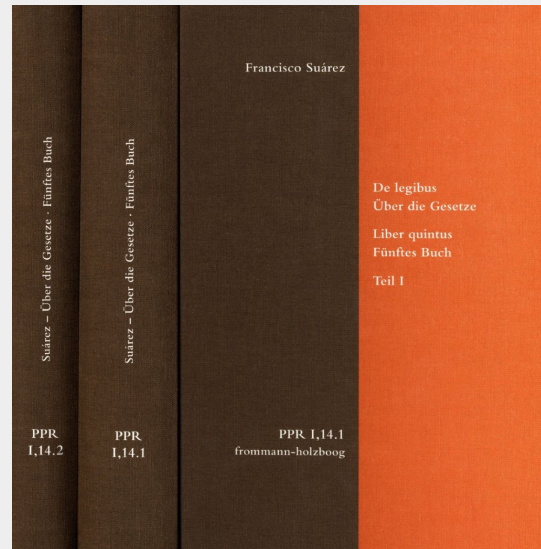
More about the project

Publications of the Month

Francisco Suárez, Bartolomé de Las Casas

Novedades en la serie “Filosofía Política y Teoría del Derecho de la Edad Media y la Edad Moderna” (PPR)

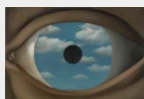
La serie [PPR](#), dirigida entre otros por Thomas Duve y Matthias Lutz-Bachmann, cuenta con dos nuevos volúmenes que serán presentados por sus editores el 17 de julio en la Sala Eisenhower de la Universidad Goethe (IG 1.314) de 16:00 a 17:30 h.



Gideon Stiening ofrece la traducción al alemán del quinto libro de [De legibus ac Deo legislatore](#) de Francisco Suárez (PPR I, 14.1–2). El teólogo-jurista salmantino se acerca al concepto de *poena* desde la teoría y la práctica, analizando su compleja relación con la noción de pecado. La edición de Mariano Delgado de la [Apologia gentium novi orbis](#) de Bartolomé de Las Casas (PPR I, 17.1–2) documenta su defensa de los pueblos indígenas frente a la política colonial española, representada por Juan Ginés de Sepúlveda y sus argumentos a favor de las guerras de conquista, postura expuesta en la famosa Controversia de Valladolid de 1550/51.

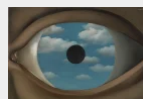
Anabel Soler

More Publications



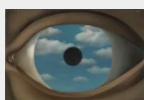
Polina Solonets

A Researcher's Guide to the Data Life Cycle – Love Your Data Blog Series Part 2, legalhistoryinsights.com, 28.05.2025



Polina Solonets

From Metadata to FAIR Principles: Make Your Data Better Now – Love Your Data Blog Series Part 3, legalhistoryinsights.com, 12.06.2025



Ellen Marques Luz

“Tinta sobre o papel” Relato de uma experiência humana e intelectual no Max Planck Institute – The Doucet



Thomas Duve

El Derecho canónico en la temprana Edad Moderna y la historia global,

Scholarship 2025,
legalhistoryinsights.com,
05.06.2025

Ius Canonicum 65:129
(2025), 169-218



The School of Salamanca: A Digital Collection of Sources
Mariana, De rege et regis institutione libri III,
15.05.2025 [1599]



The School of Salamanca: A Digital Collection of Sources
Carrasco del Saz,
Interpretatio Ad Aliquas Leges Recopilationis Regni Castellae, 21.05.2025 [1620]



The School of Salamanca: A Digital Collection of Sources
Villarroel, Gobierno Eclesiastico Pacifico,
05.06.2025 [1656]



Diccionario Histórico de Derecho Canónico en Hispanoamérica y Filipinas, S. XVI-XVIII (DCH)
Carlos Emilio Ruvituso,
Fiadores, Max Planck Institute for Legal History and Legal Theory Research Paper Series No. 2025-07, 1-40



Diccionario Histórico de Derecho Canónico en Hispanoamérica y Filipinas, S. XVI-XVIII (DCH)
Juan Cobo Betancourt,
Sacramento del Orden, Max Planck Institute for Legal History and Legal Theory Research Paper Series No. 2025-8, 1-35



José Luis Egío García
La intervención de la Monarquía Hispánica en los diezmos indianos, in: Princes, conseils et réformations à la Renaissance (eds. Álvaro Adot Lerga, Philippe Chareyre, Denes Harai), Madrid: Casa de Velázquez, 2025, 213-228



José Luis Egío García
El Manual de sacramentos de Francisco de Vitoria: Circunstancias de impresión, ediciones pre y post-tridentinas, epitomización y eco en nueva España, Cuadernos salmantinos de filosofía 52 (2025), 195-217

Events of the Month

02-03 June 2025



Institute Away Day

The institute's annual Away Day, held at the beginning of June, was a special occasion: for the first time, researchers were joined by their colleagues from the non-research divisions. The focus was on improving

cooperation between the different units and getting to know one another better.

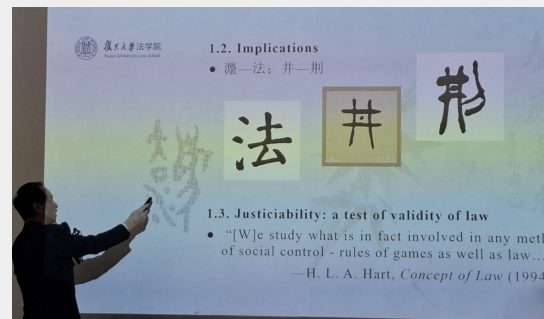
Our department presented its work with Digital Humanities (DH). Concentrating on three overarching aspects—accessibility, usability and sustainability—four major DH projects in the department ("[The School of Salamanca](#)", "[SCC Explorer](#)", "[Historical Dictionary of Canon Law](#)" and "[Non-State Law of Economy](#)") reflected on what Digital Humanities mean to them, the impact on their research and what it entails in practice to combine legal history with digital methods. All four emphasised the importance of teamwork and institutional support for the success of such endeavours.

Polina Solonets

11 June 2025

Reconsidering 'Law' in Traditional China and Beyond: A Shift of Approach from Judicature to Governance

Max Planck Lecture in Legal History and Legal Theory



La conferencia del profesor Wang ofreció una perspectiva sugerente sobre las concepciones del derecho en la China imperial, centrada en la gobernanza local y las prácticas normativas cotidianas. A partir del análisis de regulaciones locales, mostró que el orden social se basaba en normas de comportamiento internalizadas (law in mind) y en formas de resolución de conflictos más morales y comunicativas que jurídicas en sentido formal. Esta visión cuestiona la idea de que el derecho moderno, estatalizado y profesionalizado, constituye un modelo universal. En la China imperial, las normas eran generadas y aplicadas localmente, lo que pone de relieve un tipo de autoridad construida desde lo comunitario. Al comparar este modelo con el sistema de jueces de paz en la Inglaterra de la temprana Edad Moderna, Wang evidenció que también en Europa existieron formas de justicia local en las que las élites colaboraban con el poder central. Según él, esta configuración sigue resonando en la cultura jurídica contemporánea china y constituye un ejemplo de saberes normativos comunitarios que pueden ser comparados con otras experiencias jurídico-sociales.

Pilar Mejía

More Department Events

Workshops

Karla L. Escobar H. (org.), [Digital Methods for Research, Teaching,](#)

[and Public Scholarship](#), Hansaallee,
Z01, 17.06.2025, 09:00–15:15

Polina Solonets (org.), [Knowledge of Normativity and Printing Technologies. Networks, Authenticity, Typographic Devices](#),
Facultat d'Informació i Mitjans
Audiovisuals, Universitat de
Barcelona, 19.–20.06.2025, 15:00–
18:00

Rômulo da Silva Ehalt, Karoline
Marques Machado (orgs.), [Between Norms and Culture: Colonial Governance and Translation of Knowledge of Normativity in Portuguese India](#), Hansaallee, G503,
and online, 20.06.2025, 09:00–17:30

Conference

Rômulo da Silva Ehalt (org.),
[Conflict! Disputes and Divergences Inside and Outside the Society of Jesus \(16th-20th Century\)](#), Goethe-
Universität, mpilhl, St. Georgen,
16.–18.06.2025, 9:00–16:45

Methods of Legal History

Johan Horst, [Law in the Anthropocene](#), Turmcarrée, A 601,
25.06.2025, 13:00–14:30



Salamanca Colloquium

David Néstor Irazábal Martínez,
[Reasoning of judicial decisions in Catalonia in the context of early modern Iberian jurisdictional cultures](#), Goethe-Universität
Frankfurt, IG 2.501, 26.06.2025,
18:15–19:45

Marie-Astrid Hugel, [Möglichkeiten und Grenzen der päpstlichen Macht: papa/pontifex bei der Schule von Salamanca](#), Goethe-Universität
Frankfurt, IG 2.501, 03.07.2025,
18:15–19:45

Mariano Delgado, [Mit den Augen des anderen? Las Casas' Verteidigung der Völker der Neuen Welt gegen den Humanisten Sepúlveda](#), Goethe-Universität
Frankfurt, Eisenhower Saal / IG
1.314, 17.07.2025, 18:15–19:45

New in our Library



Acquisitions on Amazonia

Indigenous legal histories in Amazonia reveal a world of entangled normativities shaped by native customs, imperial laws, and missionary strategies. The library of the Max Planck Institute offers a rich collection for exploring governance over Indigenous populations from the sixteenth century onward. Its holdings comprise core legal history texts, colonial treatises, missionary writings, and interdisciplinary works addressing justice in relation to land, property, gender, race, and mestizaje. This diversity helps reconceptualize Amazonia not as an imperial periphery but as a space of active legal production where Indigenous, royal, and missionary knowledge intersected, clashed and reconfigured justice, subjection, and autonomy. By foregrounding Indigenous voices, practices, and strategies of legal intelligibility, the sources provided by the library challenge Eurocentric narratives and become a key element for building a connected, comparative legal history rooted in Amazonian experiences.

André Luís Bezerra Ferreira

[To the library catalogue](#)

Last but not least



Extended Funding of Research Group



CfA: Doucet Scholarship

The German Research Foundation (DFG) has awarded the Bonn Center for Dependency and Slavery Studies (BCDSS) at the University of Bonn an additional seven years of funding (2026–2032). The research group "[Mutual Dependencies and Normative Production in Africa](#)", led by [Raquel Sirotti](#), is part of the research cluster "[Beyond Slavery and Freedom: Asymmetrical Dependencies in Pre-Modern Societies](#)".

[More information](#)

For young researchers of legal history in early modern Hispanoamerica

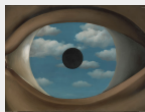
The scholarship for a three-month research stay from January to March 2026 (05.01.–31.03.2026) aims to facilitate access to the Doucet collection for young researchers, especially those from Latin America.

Applications (CV, project description and motivation letter regarding the use of the Doucet Collection) are to be submitted via our [online application form](#).

Deadline: 15 September 2025

[More information](#)

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Legal History Meets Digital Humanities

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