



Crossing Academic Cultures: Association of Young Legal Historians Founded in Seville

Report by Tilmann J. Röder, Heidelberg

Legal and historical sciences are based on communication. This is probably the main reason for the success of the *European Forum of Young Legal Historians*. During the past thirteen years this conference has developed a vivid "market place" for the exchange of fresh ideas. It is organized by young researchers for their own kind. Professors may not attend the conference as their presence could hinder the development of a free discourse. It would be unrealistic to believe that the participation even of a sympathetic professor had no effect on the behavior of those whose fates depend on his good-will. A small comfort, professors are permitted to buy and read the proceedings.

The Foundation of the AYLH

Once started in Germany, the Forum became more and more international during the past years. This process has not yet reached its end. At the meetings in Lucerne (2005) and Frankfurt am Main (2006) it became clear that many white areas still remained on the map of legal historians in Europe. Organizers also observed a great interest among young researchers from countries like Georgia, Russia, Israel and Turkey who had not heard of the Forum before. Once the contact was established, they submitted papers and attended the conference. As a consequence, the *Association of Young Legal Historians* (AYLH) has now been founded as a permanent platform which will make communication within the young scientific community much easier. Fifty-six out of sixty-five participants joined the AYLH at the Forum in Seville (5-8 September 2007). They represent more than twenty nations. Since then, the number of members is continuously rising. Institutions and professors are welcome as sustaining members without access to the assemblies. The AYLH is run by an executive board which is simply composed of the organizational committees of the past year – currently the Seville team – and that of the following year which is a group of doctoral students from the oldest Hungarian University in the city of Pécs. Mrs. Zsuzsanna Peres and Eszter Kovács provide more details regarding the Forum and the AYLH as well as membership forms (peres@ajk.pte.hu, drkovacseszter@yahoo.com).

Being a permanent organization, the AYLH will facilitate communication among young legal historians. Researchers from the peripheries of Europe and beyond will profit most as they are less well-connected than their colleagues in countries like Germany and Italy. A website of the AYLH is expected to be launched by the end of this year. It will contain an internal area where members can post detailed information about their research interests and projects. The AYLH will also take care of the continuous publication of future Forum proceedings with Martin Meidenbauer Publishers (Munich). Of course, members can always widen the scope of AYLH activities. E.g., side-talks in Seville indicated a general concern about the future of legal history as an academic discipline. Chairs seem to be closed down in many European countries. AYLH members could collect statistics and intervene in concrete cases, directing their common protest to the responsible institutions.

The Seville Forum: “Crossing Legal Cultures”

The organizers of the Forum in Seville elegantly played with the historical and symbolical power of the Andalusian capital which has seen peaceful coexistence, but also violence between Christian, Muslim and Jewish communities. By defining the adjective ‘European’ more as a cultural reference than a geopolitical boundary they expressly opened the doors for studies about the encounters and transfers of law between Europe and other regions. This concept inspired many researchers investigating the role of law in the inter-religious relations. A remarkable seven out of thirty-eight presentations were related to Islamic Law and four to Jewish or Israeli Law. In contrast, classical themes of the discipline received less attention than in the last years. Only seven presentations focused on medieval and three on ancient Greco-Roman legal history. Canon law was not discussed at all. But as participants could choose between two synchronic panels, everybody seemed to be happy and satisfied.

Of course, the speakers added much to the success of the conference. Some are especially worth mentioning as their quality was outstanding. Tomislav Karlović and Ivan Milotević lively explained the role of military diplomas for the legal integration of the Roman Empire. Norman Domeier analyzed a nationalist and sexist campaign against counselors of German Emperor William II in 1906-1909. The so-called Eulenburg affair led into the first civil process in which the new academic discipline of sexology played a major role. Mirela Kresic surprised many participants with details about the coexistence of Islamic and secular law in Croatia during the first decades of the 20th century. Other windows opened by the organizing team gave insights into legal anthropology (Ana Maria Funes: *Derecho Indígena Wílliche: El Proceso de Apropiación y Metizaje Jurídico en pos de la Defensa de Derechos Territoriales*), history of art (Pablo Avilés Flores: *La Comisión de Monumentos durante la Revolución Francesa. Discusiones Estéticas y Precedentes de la Protección del Patrimonio Cultural*) and further neighboring disciplines. All presentations are expected to be published in the third volume of the Forum proceedings in the second half of 2008 (Laura Beck-Varela et al., *Crossing Legal Cultures*, Martin Meidenbauer Verlag München).

Every organizing team decides on the concept of their own Forum, and this interdisciplinary program was authentic and convincing in Seville. Future teams will turn the focus to other aspects. It would be most interesting to assess and compare the different purposes and methods of legal history in Europe. In Seville, fascinating topics were in the air; e.g., the disappearance of differences between West- and East European approaches to legal history and the impact of systems and evolutionary theories on legal history. The question if the study of Roman law is a historical or a legal science still seems to be worth a debate. These discussions, and all others, should be held in different languages, as there is de facto no *lingua franca* of legal history in the Europe. In Seville, more than half of the presentations were held in English, but German, Italian, Spanish, and French – official conference languages – and also many others could be heard in the rooms of Seville University. Sounded like Europe.

Links:

Website of the Seville Forum http://www.tresculturas.org/ficha_actividades.cfm?id=590
Martin Meidenbauer Publishers, <http://www.m-verlag.net>

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Association of Young Legal Historians / Vereinigung Junger RechtshistorikerInnen

Statutes

Article 1: Name, Seat and Status

This association is called the „Association of Young Legal Historians (AYLH) / Vereinigung Junger RechtshistorikerInnen (VJR)“. It is established under Artt. 60–79 of the Swiss Civil Code (ZGB) and based in Zürich (Switzerland).

The society's correspondence and general assemblies (GA) shall be conducted through the medium of the English language

Article 2: Objectives

The society is established to organise the annual conference „European Forum of Young Legal Historians / Europäisches Forum Junger RechtshistorikerInnen“ (Forum), and to promote academic legal history in Europe and beyond.

The Forum shall provide a platform for young researchers for the presentation of their research results in the field of legal history. For this reason, the general themes should be as wide as possible. The Forum is aimed at all those who are interested in legal history; only professors holding a chair in legal history are, as a general rule, excluded from participation. Exceptional cases are decided by the organisational committee (OC).

The results of the conference are published in the series „Yearbook of Young Legal Historians / Jahrbuch Junge Rechtsgeschichte“.

The AYLH promotes scientific exchange between legal historians as well as the preservation and extension of legal history in Europe and beyond.

Article 3: Membership

Membership is open to individuals and organisations who wish to support the objectives of the society. The society aspires to achieve as wide a diversity of nationalities and cultures as possible.

Members pay an ordinary annual contribution of € 20,-. Members' liability is limited to this amount. Members may purchase the volumes of the Yearbook at a reduced price if there is an agreement to this effect with the publishing house.

Membership commences with the payment of the annual contribution. Non-payment of the annual contribution will lead to the loss of membership. Members may leave the society through express statement. Other cases are decided by the GA (Art. 65 ZGB).

Article 4: Organs

The organs of the AYLH are:

The general assembly (GA);

The executive board;

The auditors.

Article 5: Powers of the GA

The GA is the supreme organ of the AYLH. Its powers include:

The exclusion of members

The amendment of these statutes

The power to decide all matters that are not assigned to other organs of the society

Supervision over the activities of the organs, and their revocation.

All members who are present are entitled to vote.

Article 6: Convocation and procedure of the GA

The ordinary GA is convened after every Forum. Extraordinary GA are convened by the executive board, or by one fifth of all members.

The GA is chaired by the executive board. Decisions can be made with regard to proposals that appear on the agenda. The agenda is sent to all members together with the invitation to the Forum. Members can submit proposals to the executive board in written form up to two weeks before the GA. Decisions with respect to proposals that have not been presented in this form may be taken on the approval of at least one third of the members present.

Votes are held by open ballot; they are held by secret ballot with the approval of at least one third of the members present. All members have equal voting rights. Decisions of the society are taken on a majority vote of the members present. In the case of equality of votes, the speaker of the

executive board has a casting vote in matters not pertaining to elections or revocations. An equality of votes in election or revocation matters is resolved by means of drawing lots.

The minutes of the GA meetings are recorded. They are presented to the following GA for approval.

Article 7: The Executive Board

The executive board consists of the members of the organisational committees of the previous and of the subsequent years. The executive board is chaired by the organisational committee that prepares the following conference.

The treasurer collects and administers the annual contributions together with all other assets. He/she annually issues financial statements, consisting of a balance sheet and a profit and loss statement, based on the International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS).

The treasurer is responsible for handing over all bank details and information to the subsequent organisational committee.

At least one member of the executive board is responsible for networking according to Art. 2 para. 4 of these statutes.

Otherwise, the members of the executive boards assign their own responsibilities (Art. 69 ZGB).

Article 8: Accounting

The accounting year is the calendar year.

The resources consist primarily of the following:

Members' annual contributions;

Voluntary contributions and benefits;

Legacies and treasures.

The annual financial statement is examined by two auditors who are elected by the GA. The auditors hold their office until a request for withdrawal or replacement is submitted. They present a written auditing report to the executive committee and to the GA.

Article 9: Liquidation of the society

Liquidation is performed according to Artt. 76–78 ZGB.

The society's assets are liquidized in accordance with the provisions established for cooperatives (Art. 58 ZGB).

Association of Young Legal Historians

Membership Form

(Please fill with MAJUSCULES.)

Family Name: _____

First Name(s): _____

Nationality / -ies: _____

Institution/Faculty: _____

Postal Address: _____

E-mail Address: _____

Field(s) of Interest:

Current Research Project: _____

How did you learn about the European Forum of Young Legal Historians?

Website

Colleagues

E-Mail Newsletter (e.g. H-Net)

Report about earlier Forum

Other (please specify: _____)

I herewith join the Association of Young Legal Historians (AYLH). I declare that I accept the Statutes of the AYHL. My membership will be valid after payment of the annual members' fee of EUR 20,00 for the current year.

Place, date: _____

Signature: _____