

ESCLH Seventh Biennial Conference, Augsburg, June 21-23, 2023

The 2023 ESCLH Seventh Biennial Conference was held at the Faculty of Law of the University of Augsburg from June 21 to 23. For three days, over 36 different panels with more than 100 presentations, scholars from 32 countries representing numerous institutions discussed a variety of topics related to comparative legal history.

A pre-conference event dedicated to Ph.D. students took place on the morning of June 21. The workshop included presentations from established scholars covering different subjects, such as "Progressing from amateur to scholar and scholar to Professor" by Pr. Dr. Matthew Dyson, "Publishing in a law journal" by Pr. Dr. Agustin Parise, Pr. Dr. Emanuel van Dongen and Dr. Lorren Eldridge, "How to write a thesis in comparative legal history" by Pr. Dr. Phillip Hellwege, and "The relevance of non-legal ideas and sources in the making of legal institutions" by Pr. Dr. Aniceto Masferrer. The conference officially opened in the afternoon.

This year's conference had no theme in order to reflect the breadth of international research in the field of comparative legal history while providing researcher with the opportunity to present their latest work and research in the field. The numerous panels covered a wide array of themes and interdisciplinary approaches in comparative legal history, beginning from antiquity, passing through the Middle Ages and colonial modernity, until today. Topics in comparative legal history were approached on a range of legal fields, including but not limited to constitutional law, press and newspapers studies, biographical studies, methodology, religion and the law, human rights, procedural law, legal theory, commercial law, migration law, succession law, private law, public law, international law, criminal law, law and politics, labor law, colonial law. The variety of legal and historical perspectives utilized and the broad range of case studies presented generated fruitful discussions about themes of common interest.

Additional events further augmented the rich program of panels. After the opening address on Wednesday evening, Prof Dr. Rebecca Scott from the University of Michigan spoke at the first keynote event, speaking on "Habeas corpus turned inside out: the dynamics of peremptory enslavement in the nineteenth century Americas." A flying dinner followed the keynote at the Law School, during which scholars had an opportunity to share and discuss. On Thursday, June 22 was the mayor's reception in the Renaissance' Goldener Saal' (Golden Hall) of Augsburg's Rathaus (Town Hall), followed by the official conference dinner. The second keynote on the last day, preceding the annual general meeting, was given by Prof Dr. Kentaro Matsubara from Tokyo, who walked the scholars through "Comparison, confrontation, and co-optation: a history of improvising legal system in a global context?".

Overall, the 2023 ESCLH Seventh Biennial Conference was a compelling conference, of interest to everyone working in the broad field of legal history and was worth attending for both established scholars and junior researchers. As always, the ESCLH brought researchers together to cooperate and learn from each other. Without a doubt, it ignited a variety of further research in the field of comparative legal history. The Eighth ESCLH Biennial Conference is planned to take place in Szeged (Hungary) in 2025.

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