

Rechtsgeschichte Legal History

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<http://www.rg-rechtsgeschichte.de/rg29>

Zitiervorschlag: Rechtsgeschichte – Legal History Rg 29 (2021)

<http://dx.doi.org/10.12946/rg29/312-314>

Rg **29** 2021 312–314

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The School of Salamanca Under Scrutiny

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gangspunkt für die weitere Forschung dienen können. Auf das historische Lexikon folgt das dreisprachige Wörterverzeichnis der Rechtstermini (403–445), woran die deutsch-tschechisch-polnische Übersicht der Titel relevanter Quellen des magdeburgischen Rechtes anschließt (446–456). Ebenfalls nützlich ist der Forschungsüberblick zu den Untersuchungsgebieten Tschechien und Slowakei (77–97); auch wenn sich hier die Frage stellt, ob man nicht neben der chronologischen Gliederung die Veröffentlichungen, welche sich auf die böhmischen Länder und die Slowakei beziehen bzw. solche Arbeiten, die auf dem Boden dieser Länder entstanden, klarer von derjenigen, die in Deutschland (also »von jenseits der Grenze«) verfasst wurden, getrennt werden sollten. Nicht minder wichtig sind das Verzeichnis der erhaltenen Handschriften bzw. der Drucke von grundlegen-

den Quellen (99–126) sowie die grundlegende geographische Übersicht (527–533) und das umfangreiche Quellen- und Literaturverzeichnis; danach folgen noch die Hilfsregister.

Trotz der genannten kleineren Einwände, welche lediglich den subjektiven Blick eines tschechischen Nutzers repräsentieren, besteht kein Zweifel daran, dass hinter dem Buch ein großes Pensum beachtlicher Arbeit steht und dass dieses Buch einen prinzipiellen Beitrag zur Erkenntnis der Verbreitung des magdeburgischen Rechtes in die böhmischen Länder und in den Raum der künftigen Slowakei darstellt. Es bleibt also nur zu bedauern, dass ein ähnliches Werk nicht bereits früher an tschechischen rechtshistorischen bzw. historisch-linguistischen Arbeitsstellen entstanden ist. ■

Daniel S. Allemann

The School of Salamanca Under Scrutiny*

Teaching evaluations, research assessments, and quality management reviews are part and parcel of academic life in the 21st century. Such processes are propelled by magic words like »excellence«, »output«, or »impact«. And they are often portrayed as features of a broader transformation of the university landscape in recent decades.¹ Yet it is worth remembering that instruments for assessing academics and their work are not a novel phenomenon. As early as the 16th and 17th centuries, members of the famous School of Salamanca regularly came under scrutiny. Several times a year, the university's president examined whether the chairs under his aegis lectured and taught in ways

that corresponded to their professorial obligations. The historian of philosophy José Barrientos García has recovered the records of these disciplinary visitations. In his latest book, he offers fresh insights into the inner workings of the Faculty of Theology at Salamanca between 1560 and 1641.

This time frame is noteworthy, for it only begins after the School of Salamanca's celebrated heyday during Francisco de Vitoria's and Domingo de Soto's lifetimes. The vast majority of modern scholarship, not just in legal history, turns to emerging centers of scholastic learning elsewhere after the 1550s.² This trend continues in light of recent endeavors to place the School of Salamanca in a

* JOSÉ BARRIENTOS GARCÍA, *La Facultad de Teología de la Universidad de Salamanca a través de los libros de visitas de cátedras (1560–1641)*, Madrid: Editorial Sinderesis 2018, 1148 p., ISBN 978-84-16262-30-4

1 See e.g. KATHLEEN LYNCH, *Neo-Liberalism and Marketisation: The Implications for Higher Education*,

in: *European Educational Research Journal* 5,1 (2006) 1–17.

2 For an excellent bibliographical study of recent scholarship on the School of Salamanca, see CELIA ALEJANDRA RAMÍREZ SANTOS, JOSÉ LUIS EGÓ, *Conceptos, autores, instituciones: Revisión crítica de la investigación reciente sobre la Escuela de Salaman-*

ca (2008–19) y bibliografía multidisciplinar, con prefacio de THOMAS DUVE, Madrid 2020. Available online: <https://e-archivo.uc3m.es/handle/10016/30100>.

global context.³ Barrientos García, by contrast, swims against the current and takes a closer look at Salamanca at a time that is conventionally side-stepped in the stories that we tell about the theologians of its »school«. ⁴ The rationale for this choice is due to the nature of Barrientos García's principal sources: the so-called »books of the visitations of chairs« (*libros de visitas de cátedras*) that are preserved in the university's archive only cover the period after 1560. We know that such inspections also took place before, but no earlier records have been preserved (13).

Barrientos García's voluminous book is conceived as a reference work. At its core we find detailed information on each of the theology professorships at Salamanca in this period. In strictly chronological order, Barrientos García discusses the scope and holders of these chairs before delving into the *libros de visita*, which provide accounts of the professors' teaching methods and of whether the materials they covered corresponded to the official study plans (14). Three to five times a year, the principal and his secretary (sometimes also accompanied by the most senior professor) visited each academic during class and picked two pupils who were asked to evaluate their teacher (155–156). Barrientos García admits that most of the takes from students were benevolent and formulaic. But he rightly underscores that the visitation books provide a unique window into the theology curriculum at Salamanca.

Before we turn to this in more detail, it is worth commenting on the book's ample and intriguing introduction. In 147 pages, Barrientos García showcases the fruits of four decades of research on the Faculty of Theology at Salamanca in the 16th and 17th centuries.⁵ We learn, for instance, that the academic schedule consisted of 7.5 hours of daily lectures (except Sundays and holidays) and a break that only lasted from early September to mid-October. Yet students were solely required to attend six months of coursework to pass an academic year (17–18). And merely the lectures of the

two most prestigious professorships were mandatory: those of the prime chair, the first hour and a half each morning, and those of the vespers chair in the afternoon (24, 310, 1088). To graduate with a bachelor's degree, five annual courses were required and, from 1594, the degree was reduced to four years (65).

Students not only had an important role in evaluating their professors. What may sound surprising to our ears is that they also played a decisive role in professorial appointment procedures. In fact, it was the student body alone that decided which candidate obtained a given chair, while the university's president and his council of non-professorial academics solely oversaw the process (80–81). While this might seem like an appealing system, it suffered from serious problems. Before the age of photo IDs, it was often difficult to verify whether those enrolled as students were the same as those who were present to cast their vote (84). Moreover, since it was possible to enroll for courses throughout the academic year, it routinely occurred that monks from convents elsewhere matriculated at the University of Salamanca for the sole purpose of participating in the appointment process (106). Dirty dealings and corruption were the order of the day – and Barrientos García does not shy away from drawing parallels to his own experience within the (Spanish) university sector today (120).

He also expounds why questions about the teaching style of professors featured so prominently in the visitation books. Francisco de Vitoria had introduced dictation for note-taking as a lecturing method during his time in Salamanca, but this practice was formally prohibited within the whole university in 1561 (35–37). Three years later, Juan Pérez de Cubillas, a professor of medicine, explained in the Faculty Assembly that having students take notes prevented them from actually understanding the subject matter, for it meant that they solely studied their scratch pads instead of actual books. Worst of all, Pérez suggested,

3 THOMAS DUVE, JOSÉ LUIS EGÍO, CHRISTIANE BIRR (eds.), *The School of Salamanca: A Case of Global Knowledge Production*, Leiden 2021.

4 An important exception is JUAN BELDA PLANS, *La Escuela de Salamanca y la renovación de la teología en el siglo XIV*, Madrid 2000.

5 Among his many publications are academic monographs as well as editions of primary texts. See e. g. JOSÉ BARRIENTOS GARCÍA, *Lucha por el poder y por la libertad de enseñanza en Salamanca: Estatuto y juramento de la universidad (1627)*, Salamanca 1990; and LUIS DE LEÓN, *Tratado*

sobre la ley, ed. by JOSÉ BARRIENTOS GARCÍA, transl. by EMILIANO FERNÁNDEZ VALLINA, El Escorial 2005.

students did not even set foot in the lecture halls and sent their servants instead (40–41). Despite such critical voices and official rules, dictation remained a tolerated practice within the Faculty of Theology and was admitted again in 1575 (62).

At the heart of Barrientos García's book are detailed discussions of each chair within the Faculty of Theology. Only three of those were permanent positions: the prime and vespers chairs (chapters 2 and 3) as well as the Bible chair (chapter 7). While the latter was dedicated to lectures on the Latin Vulgate, the former centered on the exegesis of Thomas Aquinas's *Summa theologiae*. The other professorships within the Faculty of Theology were less prestigious, badly paid, and, in most cases, restricted to fixed-term contracts of four years (78). All of them were devoted to readings of scholastic luminaries: there was a chair of Duns Scotus (chapter 5), a professorship of Durand de Saint Pourçain (chapter 6), and one of Aquinas (chapter 4) – a remnant from before Vitoria had exchanged the *Summa* for Peter Lombard's *Sentences* as the main teaching book for the prime and vespers chairs (121–128, 135–142). But importantly, in the period under consideration, all these professorships, except the Bible chair, were focused on Aquinas. Even the teachings of Scotus and Durand were approached through the lens of Saint Thomas's interpretations.

In the chapters that constitute the book's core, then, Barrientos García essentially reconstructs which questions of the *Summa theologiae* were treated by which chairholder in what year. As such, the reference work is not only informative for those interested in the history of the Faculty of

Theology. It also serves as handy guide for scholars working with published texts of Salamancan theologians who are now in a position to quickly and easily look up when a given thinker first touched upon matters that later appeared in print.

For Barrientos García, however, the visitation books he has uncovered are above all a testament to the deterioration of the theological formation at Salamanca. If the gradual replacement of the *Sentences* with the *Summa* marks the inception of the »golden age« of Salamancan theology for most scholars, Barrientos García argues that it was also that which ultimately led to the School of Salamanca's demise.⁶ In his eyes, the hegemonic status of Aquinas's works pushed all other scholastic texts to the margins, significantly narrowing the intellectual breadth and depth of theological education. More than that, Barrientos García laments that due to a mix of changes in the university statutes and professors' unwillingness to comply with study plans, students no longer worked through all the central passages of the *Summa* during their degree (1089–1093). Fundamental questions of law, justice, right, or the morality of commerce that were at the heart of the theological debates of the time were almost completely sidestepped in the Salamancan lecture halls after Domingo de Soto's death in 1560 (306–307, 438–439, 560–561, 676). Even though Barrientos García fails to engage with recent scholarship on Iberian scholasticism, the overarching thesis of his book nevertheless constitutes a thought-provoking contribution to recent debates about the nature and scope of the School of Salamanca. ■

6 On the *Sentences* in early modern Salamanca and beyond, see LIDIA LANZA, MARCO TOSTE, *The Sentences in Sixteenth-Century Iberian Scholasticism*, in: PHILIPP W. ROSEMAN (ed.), *Medieval Commentaries on the Sentences of Peter Lombard*, vol. 3, Leiden 2015, 416–503.