

The Small, Medium-Sized and Large Company in Law and Economic Practice (Middle Ages-Nineteenth Century)

SQUARE Brussels Meeting Centre (www.square-brussels.com/, Glass Entrance, rue Mont des Arts, B-1000 Brussels), Brussels, 21-22 May 2015

The goal of this workshop is to bring together scholars who have worked on the interactions between law and economic practice, and to address topics concerning the history of business ventures, from the Middle Ages until c. 1900. The papers of participants assess differences with regard to the size of partnerships and companies. Over the past years, limited and general partnerships have received ample attention from economic and legal historians. Organizational laws containing structural models for small enterprises (e.g. the French *spri* and German *GmbH*) have been held up to the light. Doctrine and case law concerning partnerships have been analyzed. It seems that in both legal and economic practice, and for all periods mentioned, smaller companies mattered more than has previously been thought, and even in periods in which corporations existed. In view of this, many ideas about companies and firms – large and small – can be reconsidered. Topics that will be discussed during the workshop are, among others, legal personhood, limited liability, corporate finance, and corporate governance.

The workshop is the second in a series on the history of commercial law, organized during the 2014-2017 period in Helsinki, Brussels and Frankfurt. The conferences will be organized in the framework of the project “The making of commercial law: common practices and national legal rules from the early modern period to the modern period”.

PRELIMINARY PROGRAMME

Thursday 21 May 2015

9h coffee

9h30-10h50 first session

Ulla Kypta (University of Basel), *Associates or Agents? Trading Enterprises in Northern and Southern Germany in the Late Middle Ages*

Bart Lambert (Durham University) *Making Size Matter Less: Italian Merchant Guilds as Tools for Capital Redistribution in Late Medieval Bruges*

10h50-11h05 coffee

11h05-12h35 second session

Anja Amend-Traut (Würzburg Universität), *Structure of Early Enterprises – from Commenda-like Arrangements to Chartered Joint-Stock Companies (Early Modern Period)*

Luisa Brunori (Université Paris Sud 11 – Université Lille 2), *The Secunda Scholastica and the Commercial Company: Persons and Capital in the 16th and 17th Centuries*

12h35-14h lunch

14h-15h20 third session

Bram Vanhofstraeten (Maastricht University), *Small-scale and Medium-sized Industrial Enterprises in Seventeenth-Century Liège*

Julie Hardwick (University of Texas), *'She Failed to Make a Book': Account Books, Small Enterprises and Emerging Practices of Record Keeping in Early Modern Lyon*

15h20-15h35 break

15h35-17h fourth session

Stefania Gialdroni (Roma Trè, Arcadia University), *Incorporation and Limited Liability in the English EIC: an Uneasy Relationship*

Jelten Baguet (Vrije Universiteit Brussels), *Corporate Governance in a Small-Scale Pre-Modern Maritime Enterprise: The Case of the Ostend Company (1722-1731)*

Friday 22 May 2015

9h coffee

9h30-10h50 fifth session

Carlos Petit (Universidad de Huelva), *From Commercial Guild to Commercial Law. Spanish Company Regulations, 1737-1848.*

Annamaria Monti (Bocconi University), *Italian Late 19th-Century Companies: Size and Corporate Governance*

10h50-11h05 coffee

11h05-12h25 sixth session

Ron Harris (Tel Aviv University), *Private companies in 19th century England*

Dag Michalsen (Oslo University), *The Development of Norwegian Company Law 1875-1910*

12h30-14h lunch

14h-15h20 seventh session

Joeri Vananroye (KU Leuven), *Partnerships in 19th-20th c. French and Belgian Doctrine*

Dave De ruysscher (Vrije Universiteit Brussels), *Small Companies, Contractual Leeway and Third-Party Protection (Belgium, c. 1830-c. 1850)*

15h20-15h45 break

15h45-17h10 eight session

Edouard Richard (Université de Rennes), *The Banque d'Union générale: Legal Aspects of its Shut-Down (1878-1885)*

Matthijs de Jongh (Court of Appeal, Amsterdam), *Fuzzy Borders: Dutch Partnership and Company law in the Second Half of the 18th Century*

The organizational committee

Dave De ruysscher (Vrije Universiteit Brussels-FWO Flanders), Heikki Pihlajamäki (University of Helsinki), Albrecht Cordes (Goethe-Universität Frankfurt), Serge Dauchy (Université Lille 2)

Practical info

Entrance is free, but registration is required. The final date is 15 April 2015. Please send an email to dderuyss@vub.ac.be. Papers will be sent to participants.