

NATURAL LAW 1625-1850. AN INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH PROJECT:

Teaching Hugo Grotius.

The academic Reception of *De Iure Belli ac Pacis* in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries

Venue: IZEA, MLU Halle-Wittenberg

Time: 09.10. – 11.10.2025

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Hugo Grotius's *De Iure Belli ac Pacis*, first published in Paris in 1625, is undoubtedly one of the most influential books ever written. By 1645 and thus during Grotius' lifetime, six editions had already appeared, and the number of editions and translations subsequently published worldwide is almost impossible to keep track of. Although originally presented as a fundamental work on the law of nations aimed at defining the legal framework for armed conflicts (seven years after the beginning of the Thirty Years' War), it was more than that. Already the subtitle announces that it is primarily intended to explain the "Jus Naturae et Gentium" and the "Jus Publicum". In fact, *De Iure Belli ac Pacis* offers a general jurisprudence with a stance on almost all matters of law from the perspective of possible violations.

Although the surviving evidence of the reception of *De Iure Belli ac Pacis* beginning soon after its publication is extensive and varied, the history of the book's significance has mostly been written in general terms. The quatercentenary of the publication offers a welcome opportunity to reconstruct this history in some detail.

A cursory overview will suggest different phases of the reception. Initially - i.e. in the second half of the 17th century - a commentary literature dominated that aimed at factual exposition of the work or invoked it for partisan support of a favoured doctrine. But Samuel Pufendorf turned exposition into detailed analysis and partisanship into a steppingstone for the author's own theory, and teachers of natural law in the late 17th and 18th centuries similarly combined the two. Chr. Thomasius, J. G. Heineccius and Chr. Wolff are only the most prominent examples of creative readings of *The Rights of War and Peace* and only in the German context.

However, a reconstruction of the historically concrete reception of *The Rights of War and Peace* has to go beyond uncovering traces of Grotian thought in the juridical or philosophical treatises of his successors. Here the focus must be on the media of transmission and textual genres typical for the reception of *De Iure Belli ac Pacis*. Since the Grotius discussion – not only, but mainly – took place in academic teaching, or was closely connected to it, the corresponding texts and, where possible, their practical usage must be in the foreground: In addition to textbooks and dissertations, these include lecture notes, lecture announcements and lecture catalogues; works that made *De Iure Belli ac Pacis* teachable and accessible, such as commentaries and tables. In other words, the creative adaptations of the work, especially by editors and academic teachers in various disciplines, must be at the centre of any reconstruction of the productive reception of *De Iure Belli ac Pacis*.

A complete review of the dissemination of *De Iure Belli ac Pacis* is obviously not possible in a conference, but a wide-ranging programme with the concrete targets will make a difference. Historians of law, philosophy and politics will address aspects of this reception during the 17th and 18th centuries in widely different parts of the world by considering the types of sources mentioned.

The conference will focus first on various forms of academic presentation of Grotius' *De Iure Belli ac Pacis*, especially editions, lectures and tables. This will form the starting point for the subsequent historical-geographical section on a variety of different reception initiatives in different locales, presented in chronological order. Without pretending to provide a complete picture of the European reception of DIBP, the conference will offer focal points and patterns of perception that are suitable for answering the question of the specific appeal of DIBP. It is obvious that the interest was different at different times, in different regions and from the perspective of different disciplines, but exactly how and why remains to be seen in the contributions to the conference. Specifically, we will be testing the general impression that the early reception was concerned with the "true" presentation of Grotius's theory, the later with superseding that theory.

Programme

Thursday, 09.10.2025

09.00–09.15 KNUD HAAKONSSSEN, LAURA BECK VARELA, FRANK GRUNERT
Welcome and Introduction

1. FORMS OF PRESENTATION

Chair: MARTIN MULSOW (ERFURT)

09.15–10.00 MARTINE VAN ITTERSUM (DUNDEE)
Hugo Grotius' public personas in the Age of Enlightenment

10.00–10.45 MARK SOMOS (HEIDELBERG)
Teaching DIBP: new evidence from the global census bibliography

10.45–11.15 *COFFEE BREAK*

11.15–12.00 BENJAMIN STEINER (ERFURT / MUNICH)
Teaching Grotius by tables

12.00–12.45 FRANK GRUNERT (HALLE)
DIBP as a subject of academic lectures: Jakob Thomasius, Christian Wolff and Johann Gottlieb Heineccius

12.45–13.45 *Lunch*

2. GROTIUS AS FOUNDING FATHER: MYTH AND REALITY

CHAIR: KNUD HAAKONSSSEN (ST ANDREWS)

13.45–14.30	MARTIN MULSOW (ERFURT) Reception of Grotius in Boecler's Circle
14.30–15.15	GÁBOR GÁNGÓ (BUDAPEST) Johann Heinrich Boecler's <i>Commentatio</i> on Grotius's DIBP in the context of the early German reception
15.15–16.00	STEFANIE ERTZ (ERFURT) Conring's <i>Disputatio philosophica de jure</i> , Helmstedt 1637, as a premature document of philosophical reception of DIBP at German academia – and, possibly, as an authentic interpretation of the <i>Etiam si daremus</i>
<u>16.00–16.30</u>	<u>COFFEE BREAK</u>

3. TEACHING *DE IURE BELLI AC PACIS* IN DIFFERENT LOCALES

3.1. GROTIUS IN THE CATHOLIC WORLD

Chair: FIAMMETTA PALLADINI (BERLIN)

16.30–17.15	GUSTAVO CABRAL (FORTALEZA) Natural law and rationalism in Portuguese language: the impact of Hugo Grotius in the Portuguese legal Enlightenment and in the rising of Brazilian legal literature
17.15–18.00	JOSÉ LUIS EGIO (MADRID) Grotius' DIBP in the writings of Diego Vincencio de Vidiana. Scholastic reorientation and practical and pedagogical implications
18.00–18.45	<u>OPENING OF THE EXHIBITION:</u> <u>GROTIUS BEING READ – BOOKS AND THEIR MARGINALIA</u>
<u>19.15</u>	<u>Dinner</u>

Friday, 10.10.2025

09.00–09.45	LAURA BECK VARELA (MADRID) Grotius on the Index: Censorship of Heineccius' <i>Praelectiones academicae</i> on Grotian DIBP in late eighteenth-century Spain
09.45–10.30	FELIX WALDMANN (CAMBRIDGE) Grotius and curricular natural law in the Kingdom of Naples, 1744-1792
<u>10.30–11.00</u>	<u>COFFEE BREAK</u>
11.00–11.45	IVO CERMÁN (ČESKÉ BUDĚJOVICE) Liberal or absolutist? Grotius' DIPB and Austrian enlightened absolutism

3.2. ENGLAND, SCOTLAND, NETHERLANDS

Chair: LAURA BECK VARELA (MADRID)

- 11.45–12.30 HANS BLOM (ROTTERDAM)
The mid-seventeenth century Dutch reception of Hugo Grotius:
republican dog whistles, theological justifications and legal
technicalities
- 12.30–13.15 GIOVANNI GELLERA (GENEVA)
Natural, Roman and national law in seventeenth-century Scotland
- 13.15–14.15 **LUNCH**
- 14.15–15.00 BRANDON CLYDESDALE (EDINBURGH)
Francis Dickins – Grotius, Cambridge, and the Scottish Enlightenment
- 15.00–15.45 KNUD HAAKONSSSEN (ST ANDREWS)
Thomas Rutherforth's Cambridge lectures on Grotius
- 15.45–16.15 **COFFEE BREAK**

3.3. SCANDINAVIA

Chair: GABRIELLA SILVESTRINI (VERCELLI)

- 16.15–17.00 PÄRTEL PIIRIMÄE (TARTU)
Grotius in Uppsala in the seventeenth century
- 17.00–17.45 MAD LANGBALLE JENSEN (LUND)
Early receptions of Grotius and Selden in seventeenth-century
Denmark: the establishment of an academic discipline
- 17.45–18.30 SØREN KOCH (BERGEN)
The impact of Grotius' DIBP on Scandinavian lawyers and law-teaching
- 19.15 **Dinner**

Saturday, 11.10.2025

3.4. GERMANY

Chair: SIMONE ZURBUCHEN (LAUSANNE)

- 09.00–09.45 ANDREAS BLANK (KLAGENFURT)
Methodological Criticism: Johannes von Felden's "Annotata" to Grotius
- 09.45–10.30 MIKKEL MUNTHE JENSEN (HALLE)
Simon Heinrich Musäus and the teaching of Grotius at the University of
Kiel, 1682–1711

10.30–11.00 COFFEE BREAK

11.00–11.45 MARTIN KÜHNEL (HALLE)
Grotius in Halle

4. Results and further Perspectives.

11.45–12.30 MICHAEL SEIDLER (BOWLING GREEN)
Concluding remarks

END OF THE CONFERENCE