
CALL FOR PAPERS

Colloquium

Archéoforum de Liège (Belgium)

21 October 2019

Court proceedings treasures
The archives of the Imperial Chamber Court of Wetzlar
(15th – 19th century)

Hundreds of linear metres of archives from Ancien Regime courts still need to be processed and explored. But the case files of the Imperial Chamber Court conserved at the State Archives in Liège are now sorted and ready to be used in research that started in the 1970s in Germany.

The Imperial Chamber Court has produced thousands of proceeding files, of which over 2,000 are conserved at the State Archives in Liège. Their historical and archival importance cannot be underlined enough. These proceedings are mainly characterised by their written nature. Research might be of particular interest about the supporting documents whose iconographical and aesthetical value commands admiration.

In 1495, the Holy Roman Empire Saint-Empire was given a new court of justice. The *Reichskammergericht* became the supreme court for civil matters. At first it was an ambulatory court, before establishing in the land of Hesse, more precisely in the city of Wetzlar. Since then, the city's name is closely associated with the history of the Imperial Chamber Court and its archives.

While historical science has mainly been focussed on politics, diplomacy and military history in the course of the 19th and early 20th centuries, it now delves into social history and microhistory. An interesting reflection is taking place about the relation between archives and (state) power, between the archivist and his or her commitment. From a civil point of view, archives might form a sort of “total history”. But this bears the question: can these archives considered as “total archives”? There are, among others, still many gaps in the history of law in the early modern

period, regarding access to justice, efficiency of the justice system, quality and corruption of the judiciary, and the role of women.

As a follow-up to colloquium “Case closed! Case files from the Ancien Regime and perspectives for historical research” held on 11 March 2013 in Brussels, and the related inventory and works, as well as the exposition about the case files from the Imperial Chamber Court concerning Liège, the State Archives in collaboration with the *Gesellschaft für Reichskammergerichtsforschung* organises a new colloquium on 21 October 2019.

Draft papers (maximum 500 words including bibliography and notes) can be submitted until **1 March 2019** to Laetizia.Puccio@arch.be.

Papers should bear on:

- The archives of the Imperial Chamber Court and its most precious proceedings.
- The Imperial Chamber court and the history of law: comparative analysis.
