

A Short Guide to Early Modern Legal and Political Thought

with Special Reference to Germany

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The purpose of this short bibliography is to give readers unfamiliar with the field of early modern European legal and political thought a means of orientation. It is divided into five sections. The first lists bibliographies, dictionaries, handbooks, research tools, and the like. The second lists narrative surveys and introductions to legal and political thought. The third lists the main collections of civil and canon law. It also makes reference to some early modern editions, because those include the standard medieval and early modern glosses on which students of law would have relied for information. The fourth section is meant for readers seeking frames of reference. It includes a few essays and articles selected mainly for their brevity, clarity of exposition, or distinctive perspective on basic issues. The last section lists works that have made a major contribution to our understanding of the field, or represent a particular approach to it particularly clearly, or both.

Since early modern legal and political thought is difficult to understand without reference to the preceding history of law, I have not restricted myself to works dealing exclusively with the early modern period. In order to include as many different authors as possible I have with a few exceptions mentioned no more than one title per author per section. I have also tried not to discriminate on the basis of age, national origin, faith, or sex, but I find that I have privileged recent writings in English by men. Since lack of space made it impossible to include a judicious selection of works written by the individual canonists and civilians themselves—not to mention philosophers or theologians with ideas about law—I have mentioned no such works at all. For guidance to primary sources readers will have to rely on the tools listed in the reference section, many of which are, fortunately, excellent.

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