

A school fraught with history

The Lyon law school, which is now a part of the Jean Moulin University-Lyon 3, was created by decree issued on October, 29, 1875, by Marshal Mac Mahon. The university palace, located at 15 quai Claude Bernard, on the banks of the Rhône, which still houses the university's head office, was inaugurated by French President Felix Faure on May, 1, 1896.

The origins of the teaching of law in Lyon: The Law school is the heir of a glorious past. Although its exact history is difficult to reconstruct, it still appears that the teaching of law in Lyon has a long history. More manuscripts of the code of Theodosius have been discovered in Lyon than anywhere else; the Epitome lugdunensis constitutes one of the most interesting summaries of the Breviary of Alaric; let us also remember the Studium Juris of Pope Innocent IV, where civil law as well as canon law were taught, and the foundation of the Ecole Municipale at the end of the 13th century, where many eminent legum professores, gave their lessons...

Then, the historical sources became less numerous, and it is not certain that a teaching of law was maintained between Saône and Rhône after the 14th century, for most of Lyon's young people went to study at the universities of Valence, Avignon or Toulouse.

During the 17th century, the teaching of law came back into favour, and the city's almanacs frequently mentioned the Law school, where studies last three years, during which civil law, canon law, French law and the Ordonnance of 1667 are taught in turn. In 1804, Lyon did not appear on the list of cities where twelve new Law schools would open. However, the creation of a Chair of civil law under the July Monarchy, the opening of free law classes during the First French Empire and the increasing number of petitions and protests all led to the creation of the Law school, at the beginning of the Third Republic.

Today, the Lyon Law school enjoys a national and international reputation of distinction. In the latest edition of the Gourman Report (6th ed, 1993), it was ranked 1st among France's provincial universities, and 5th among European universities, behind Paris, Oxford, Cambridge and Heidelberg.

The Law school owes its position of excellence on the honor roll to the distinction of its teachers, to the diversity of the of the course offerings, to the quality of its research and to the scope of its influence on the academic world.

In 2005, the Law school celebrated its 130th anniversary. A few dozens of students in the 1880s, 8000 today - what a great contrast! In a time when many Law schools are wondering about the present and the future, it seemed of paramount importance for academics and alumni to bring back to life the memory of their school, to remember its great moments as well as its darker ones and to evoke the masters that trained generations of lawyers, the fascinating international adventures, notably in Egypt and Lebanon, and the lives of Law students.

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