Origins of Legislative Sovereignty and the Legislative State

Volume One

Corasius and the Renaissance Systematization of Roman Law

A. London Fell

Athenäum Königstein/Ts., West Germany

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By A. London Fell

Origins of Legislative Sovereignty and the Legislative State

Volume One Corasius and the Renaissance Systematization of

Roman Law

 $Volume\ Two$ $Classical,\ Medieval,\ and\ Renaissance\ Foundations\ of$

Corasius' Systematic Methodology

Volume Three Bodin's Humanistic Legal System and Rejection of

"Medieval Political Theology"*

Volume Four Medieval or Renaissance Origins? *

^{*}Forthcoming

To My Father and the Memory of My Mother

Preface

The origins and character of sovereignty and the state in the modern world have long interested scholars and statesmen. This study demonstrates that the modern concept of the state as an autonomous public entity began in the early modern period of European history, and that the basis of that concept of the state was a systematized concept of public legislation. The term "legislative state" is used here to characterize modern concepts of the state in which public legislation is the state's main foundation, just as the term "legislative sovereignty" typifies modern concepts of sovereignty in which public legislation is the principal basis. The legislative concepts of sovereignty and the state developed together in various writings of the sixteenth century. The importance of legislation has often been neglected by recent historians, as have the works to be discussed.

The present volume focuses on, but is not confined to, the sixteenth-century French jurist Joannes Corasius and his treatise on the art of law. In that work Corasius utilized Aristotle's four causes in such a way as to posit a theory of public legislation as the basis of the early modern state, and the state as the end of legislation. He joined a legislative notion of the state with a legislative concept of sovereignty. The emphasis on legislation in Corasius' art or system of law, which he based on the Aristotelian four causes, distinguished him from his predecessors and anticipated Jean

Bodin's stress on legislation and use of the four causes. The treatises that Corasius, Bodin, and other jurists wrote in this genre are called (Renaissance) "arts" of law or legal systematizations, and the genre itself is characterized as the Renaissance (tradition of the) art of law, which was part of the broader systematist movement in civil law. Corasius' neglected work, On Reducing Civil Law to an Art (De iure civili in artem redigendo), bears close relationship to Bodin's subsequent neglected treatise, Distribution of Universal Law (Iuris universi distribution), and helps one understand some of the background and origins of Bodin's concepts of the legislative character of sovereignty and the state. Written in the mid-sixteenth century, both works were "arts" or systems of law in which the authors made extensive use of the four causes of law as an organizational device and conceived of sovereignty and the state within the framework of legislation. Corasius' importance in his own right and his influence on Bodin and other writers have not been generally recognized.

This is the first of four volumes bearing directly or indirectly on the subject in the main title, Origins of Legislative Sovereignty and the Legislative State. Although this volume centers on Corasius' concepts of the four causes in his art of law, it relates his works to a wide array of other juristic works: hence the subtitle "Corasius and the Renaissance Systematization of Roman Law." The foundation work for this book is contained in an independent vet subsidiary second volume, "Classical, Medieval, and Renaissance Foundations of Corasius' Systematic Methodology." A third volume, "Bodin's Humanistic Legal System and Rejection of Medieval Political Theology'," will concentrate on Bodin's uses of the four causes in his art of law, the influence of his legal system on his other works, and issues relating to the main title. A fourth volume will address the question of "Medieval or Renaissance Origins?" in relation to the main title. This first volume, then, is the beginning of a multi-volume study of interpretative textual problems centering on the encyclopedic art of law in Renaissance jurisprudence, particularly on the arts of law by Corasius and Bodin based on the four causes. The first volume establishes the framework for the ensuing volumes. The complexity and technicality of themes and

^{1.} Corasius, *De iure civili in artem redigendo*, in Corasius' *Opera* (Wittenberg, 1603, 2 vols.), Vol. II, pp. 437A–528B. Hereafter abbreviated Ars. The editor was V. W. Forster.

^{2.} Bodin, *Iuris universi distributio*, in *Oeuvres philosophiques de Jean Bodin* (ed. Pierre Mesnard, Paris, 1951), pp. 71ff.

multitude of writings requiring discussion justify the length and scope of

the project.

Corasius applied the four causes to topics of Roman law and legislation in Justinian's *Digest* and *Code* in an attempt to fulfill in part Cicero's dream in *De oratore* I of an art of law. The four causes as conceived for philosophy by Aristotle in *Physics* II were the efficient cause or maker of a thing, the final cause or goal, the formal cause or essence of the product made, and the material cause or raw substance from which forms are made. In Corasius' system, the four causes of law and legislation concerned the maker as legislator, the end as justice and the state, form as legislation, and matter as judicial decisions. He placed the four causes within the broader context of the four questions (as discussed in Chapter III, Section 4). Aristotle had conceived the four questions in *Posterior Analytics* II, and Corasius adapted them, using other sources as well, to mean whether law exists, what its definition is, what its divisions are (including the efficient, formal, and material causes), and what its purpose is (including the final cause).

Within the context of the four causes, Corasius perceived the significance of legislation for public law, sovereignty, the state, and for other related problems in legal, political, and constitutional theory. His art of law was largely an art of legislation; just as he sought to arrange the scattered elements and principles of civil law in a coherent art, system, and discipline and to place the art of law on a par with other already existing arts, so did he also endeavor to systematize legislative principles. Like Bodin, he systematized and rethought topics relating to legislation, sovereignty, and the state that had remained disordered since Justinian's Corpus Iuris Civilis.3 These topics included jurisdiction, custom, natural justice, civil justice, rulership, judgments, municipal law, and public law. Corasius and Bodin, in numerous places in their arts or systems of law, systematically interrelated disparate materials of Roman law concerning legislation, public law, sovereignty, and the state more closely and clearly than they had previously been arranged in Roman law and in commentaries on it, including Corasius' own.

Corasius' Ars, the most convenient short abbreviation for his art of law, was written mostly at Toulouse, completed by 1557, and published at Lyons in 1560—during the second half of his career. Its initial stages go

^{3.} Corpus Iuris Civilis [a title first used in Gothofredus' 1583 edition]: Paulus Krueger, Berlin, 1882) and Digesta (ed. Theodor Mommsen, Berlin, 1882); Vol. II, Codex (ed. P. Krueger, Berlin, 1884).

back at least a decade and a half to Corasius' early days at the University of Toulouse as a systematic commentator on the Roman law contained in Justinian's *Digest* and *Code*. Born at Toulouse in 1515, the first year of Francis I's reign, Corasius (Jean de Coras) devoted the first half of his career to academic pursuits, lecturing and writing mostly on Roman law at Toulouse, Valence, and Ferrara. He spent the second half of his professional career, starting in 1553, in public service. He was royal counsellor in the Toulouse *parlement* and Chancellor of Navarre, and died at Toulouse in the St. Bartholemew's Massacre of 1572 (all of which is discussed in Part One).

Three main approaches of Corasius interest us. In employing the efficient cause of law (discussed in Part Two), Corasius lays new emphasis on the power to make law and establishes a closer, clearer connection between sovereignty and legislative power than was made before by other jurists. With respect to the formal and material causes of law (discussed in Part Three), he pays new attention to the force or action of legislation in relation to the judges and citizens of the state and connects sovereignty with the continuing, binding force of the legislator's law. In the area of the final cause of law (discussed in Part Four), he focuses in a novel way on the "state itself" and connects sovereign powers with the state. In all three areas he rejected many traditional views.

Bodin began his own system of law based on the four causes (here abbreviated as *Distributio*) toward the end of his Toulouse period, in 1560, yet it was not completed and published until some time later; he viewed sovereignty and the state in ways that correspond with these three Corasian approaches. Bodin emphasizes, first, the power to make law, which is the key component of his definition of sovereignty. Second, he stresses the binding power that the legislator's law has upon all citizens in general and in particular. This problem he closely relates to the effect of law or "action of the law," which was another celebrated aspect of his concept of sovereignty. Third, Bodin emphasizes the close relationship between legislative sovereignty and the state, sovereignty being to him the principal aspect of the state, which was his major concern in the *Republic*. Scholars have long thought that Bodin's emphasis of these three concepts was almost wholly revolutionary.

Our attempt to use the writings of Corasius and other legal systematists as a partial source for Bodin's ideas of the legislative character of sovereignty and the state helps to settle several historiographical discrepancies. Some medievalists have depicted Bodin's concept of legislative sovereignty in the *Republic* of 1576 as the product of a long tradition of thought on sovereignty that originated in late-medieval arguments from Roman and canon law (which were supposedly "close to," or "of the same kind as,"

or "hardly distinguishable from" those of Bodin). Some Bodin scholars, in contrast, have depicted Bodin's understanding of legislative sovereignty in the *Republic* as a revolutionary break from late-medieval and earlier Renaissance arguments from Roman law, and even as a rebellion against Bodin's earlier acceptance in the *Methodus* (1566) of traditional aspects of thought on jurisdiction. Similarly, various medievalists in recent decades have depicted the modern "theory of legislation" as beginning in the late Middle Ages from the twelfth to the fourteenth centuries; whereas some Bodin scholars have recently depicted it as beginning only later in a revolutionary way in the mid-sixteenth century in the writings of Bodin. Other medievalists have argued that modern concepts of the state as an abstract, independent entity based on public law originated in the late Middle Ages; while some Renaissance scholars suggest that such a theory did not originate until the later Renaissance with Bodin.

^{4.} Telling interchangeable phrases such as these appear in Michael J. Wilks, The Problem of Sovereignty in the Later Middle Ages (Cambridge, 1963), pp. 151, 159; Gaines Post, review-article on Wilks' book, Speculum, XXXIX (1964), p. 368, and "Vincentius Hispanus, 'Pro Ratione Voluntas,' and Medieval and Early Modern Theories of Sovereignty," Traditio, XXVIII (1972), pp. 183–184, 159–160; Walter Ullmann, The Medieval Idea of Law as Represented by Lucas de Penna (London, 1946; reproduced 1969), pp. 95, 183, and Principles of Government and Politics in the Middle Ages (London, 1961), p. 282 and passim; Ernst Kantorowicz, "Kingship under the Impact of Scientific Jurisprudence," Twelfth Century Europe and the Foundations of Modern Society (ed. M. Clagett, G. Post, R. L. Reynolds, Madison, Wis., 1961), pp. 99, 110n. 47.

^{5.} Myron P. Gilmore, Argument from Roman Law in Political Thought, 1200–1600 (Cambridge, 1941; reproduced New York, 1967), Ch. III. The ideological split between Bodin's Methodus and Bodin's Republic is also stressed by Julian H. Franklin, Jean Bodin and the Rise of Absolutist Theory (Cambridge, 1973). Bodin's Methodus d facilem historiarum ad senatum populumque tolosatem is in Oeuvres philosophiques, pp. 107ff.

^{6.} E.g., Gaines Post, Studies in Medieval Legal Thought: Public Law and the State, 1100–1322 (Princeton, 1964), pp. 10, 512, 534, 554; Joseph R. Strayer, Medieval Statecraft and the Perspectives of History (Princeton, 1971, p. 295 (in conjunction with pp. 258–261).

^{7.} E.G., Julian H. Franklin, Jean Bodin and the Sixteenth-Century Revolution in the Methodology of Law and History (New York, 1963), pp. 154, 57.

^{8.} E.g., Post, Studies, Pt. II; Strayer, On the Medieval Origins of the Modern State (Princeton, 1970), passim, and Medieval Statecraft, esp. pp. 341–348.

^{9.} E.g., in general, Jean Moreau-Reibel, Jean Bodin et le droit publique comparé dans ses rapports avec la philosophie de l'histoire (Paris, 1933); J. H. Hexter,

Thus, medievalists have sometimes claimed that modern ideas of legislation, sovereignty, and the state existed in the Middle Ages (when they did not), while recent experts of the Renaissance have often not perceived that these ideas emerged in the sixteenth century (although they did), owing to their view that Bodin's theories were a "virgin birth." The resolution of these and other conflicting views will require a reconsideration of various definitions of sovereignty and the state, as well as an examination of the previously neglected writings of Corasius and other legal systematists of the mid-sixteenth century. Despite the fact that interest in Bodin has grown rather than diminished in recent decades, with new areas and approaches continuing to proliferate in scholarly literature, 10 the immediate precursors of Bodin's theories of the legislative character of sovereignty and the state have long remained obscure. This is surprising, for in the estimation of scholars, Bodin's Republic (De la république or De republica) 11 has traditionally represented, and continues to represent, the single most important Renaissance model for ideas of sovereignty and the state.

* * *

I am grateful for the excellent comments I have received on content, organization, and style from numerous readers of materials in this and succeeding volumes. Professor Joseph R. Strayer—whose lectures at Princeton on the origins of the state sparked by initial interest in the present general area of study—provided helpful suggestions on questions of constitutional history. For the history of law and legal theory (or jurisprudence in history), I was able to draw upon the knowledge of Professors Christoph Bergfeld, Donald R. Kelley, and Domenico Maffei for the Renaissance; of Professors Roger S. Bagnall, Frank Bourne, Charles Donahue, and A. Arthur Schiller for ancient Rome; and of Professor Gaines Post for the late Middle Ages. I benefited from the comments of Professors Julian H. Franklin, Ralph E. Giesey, Myron P. Gilmore, and Kenneth T. McRae on the

[&]quot;Il principe and lo stato," Studies in the Renaissance, IV (1957), pp. 113–138; also, Vittorio de Caprariis, Propaganda e pensiero politico in Francia durante le guerre di religione, Vol. 1 (Naples, 1959).

^{10.} E.g., Horst Denzer (ed.), Münchener Studien zur Politik, Vol. XVIII, Jean Bodin: Verhandlungen der internationalen Bodin Tagung (Munich, 1973).

^{11.} Bodin, Les six livres de la république (Paris, 1577), and De republica, libri sex (Lyons and Paris, 1586).

history of political science in the Renaissance. For the history of philosophy and intellectual history, I profited from advice by Professors Neal W. Gilbert, Walter J. Ong, S.J., and Eugene F. Rice, Jr., on the Renaissance; by Professor Friedrich Solmsen on the ancients; and by Professor Jeannine Quillet on the late Middle Ages. Others who contributed in more general ways include Professor Julian P. Boyd, who drew my attention closer to the implications of the present topic in an age such as ours in which the independent, legislative functions of Congress have for some time been becoming less and less potent owing to the ever-expanding legislative powers of an "imperial Presidency" and a Supreme Court of "superlegislators." The penultimate version was read thoroughly several times by Profesor G. Wylie Sypher, who made extensive, detailed suggestions, for which I am especially grateful.

Numerous persons at collections in America, France, and England also assisted me, particularly at the following universities: Princeton (Firestone Library), Harvard (Widener and Law Libraries), Yale (Sterling, Beinecke, and Law Libraries), Columbia (Butler and Law Libraries), Chicago (Newberry Library), and the University of Michigan (Law Library); and at the Library of Congress, British Museum, Bibliothèque Nationale, Bibliothèque Cujas de Droit et Sciences Économiques (Paris), Bibliothèque Municipale de Toulouse, and Bibliothèque interuniversitaire as well as the Université des Sciences Sociales in Toulouse (Centre d'histoire juridique), where Professor Germain Sicard supplied some of the required information.

In some instances I have included Latin phrases, passages, and titles in the main text rather than in footnotes in order to provide greater accuracy, especially in the course of complicated legal treatments of sovereignty and the state as well as philosophical discussions on the four causes and art of law. I have sometimes modernized Latin punctuation in cases where there is no modern edition of a work. In Latin spelling I have, for example, generally used *i* for *j*. Latin and vernacular spellings of names are, as usual, more a matter of choice and convention than of logic and vary according to the individual figure and personal preference. Like some writers, I have preferred, for instance, Alciatus to Alciato, Bartolus to Bartolo, and Corasius (the name used in Latin writings) to De Coras or Coras, although, like some, I have preferred Doneau to Donellus and Connan to Connanus. Like most writers, I have found it impossible to follow hard and fast rules in this regard.

Concerning references to Roman law, I have preferred the form *Digest* II, for example, and not *Digest* 2, when used alone; at the same time, I have found it preferable to use D.2 [*Digest* II] 1.3, for example, when referring to specific texts. References in crucial cases to the first word or words of

texts contained in the Digest and Code are to "law" or text (1.), and to paragraph or section (§). 12

A comprehensive bibliography and index will appear in the last volume.

A.L.F.

^{12.} Two standard reference works, which are not usually cited by scholars who use them, have proved helpful. The *Indices corporis iuris civilis iuxta vetustiores editiones cum criticis collatas* (Milan, 1964–1970), 5 vols. in 3 "parts," *Index titulorum*, *Index legum*, *Index paragraphorum*, by Hugone (Ugo) Nicolini and Franca Sinatti D'Amico, has been useful for converting sixteenth-century verbal citations of the *Corpus Iuris* to modern numerical format. The *Orbis Latinus; Lexikon Lateinischer geographischer Namen des Mittelalters und der Neuzeit* (Braunschweig, 1971), by Johann G. T. Grässe *et al.*, has been valuable in deciphering the place of publication of various Latin works; in a few places I have provided the English equivalents in brackets alongside some lesser known Latin names of places of publication.

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