

# Scholars and Literati at the University of Ingolstadt (1459–1800)

David de la Croix

Clara Kotala

Robert Stelter

IRES/LIDAM, UCLouvain

University of Basel

This note is a summary description of the set of scholars and literati who taught at the University of Ingolstadt from its inception in 1459 to its relocation in 1800.

## 1 SOURCES

To compile the prosopographical database of the University of Ingolstadt, we relied on both primary and secondary sources. The *Matriculum* of the University of Ingolstadt, Landshut, and Munich documents rectors and professors from 1472 to 1872, covering the period when the university was located in Ingolstadt until the late 18th century (Freninger 1872). The *Repertorium Academicum Germanicum* provides a very comprehensive coverage up to 1550 (Schwinges and Hesse 2019). Wolff (1973) provides additional data on the law faculty. Sommervogel (1890), and more importantly, Romstöck (1898), provide a very broad coverage of the Jesuit professors. Finally Schrottenberg (1979) offers detailed information on professors up to 1676, including salary records.

## 2 THE UNIVERSITY

The University of Ingolstadt was founded in 1472 by Duke Ludwig IX of Bavaria-Landshut. It was initially modeled after the University of Vienna. Over the period 1472–1550s, the university quickly became a center for humanist scholarship and Catholic theology. In the early 16th century, Johann Eck, a prominent theologian, taught there and debated Martin Luther, reinforcing the university's role as a defender of Catholicism. The university fell under Jesuit control from 1549, becoming a key institution in the Counter-Reformation, promoting strict Catholic orthodoxy.

The city of Ingolstadt successfully withstood a siege by the Swedish army during the Thirty Years' War, so that the university was only mildly disrupted during this troubled period.

The university was an intellectual center for Early Modern Scholasticism, resisting Protestant and Enlightenment influences. In the 1700s, the university faced stagnation as new Enlightenment ideas spread across Europe. Some reforms were attempted in the late 18th century, but the university remained largely conservative. In 1799–1800, due to political and military pressures of the Napoleonic Wars, the university moved 66km to Landshut, and was renamed as the University of Landshut. In 1826 it was moved again, to Munich, where it became Ludwig Maximilian University of Munich (LMU).

## 3 DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS

Table 1 presents descriptive statistics of the data, which includes information on 1,195 scholars. Nearly half of the population is concentrated in the university's early years, up until the Reformation. While the place of birth is consistently recorded, many birth dates from this period remain undocumented. Most early scholars were local, as indicated by the relatively low median distance between their birthplaces and the university. Additionally, at first glance, these scholars appear to have had low notability – only 8.5% had a Wikipedia page, and 15.1% had a VIAF record. However,

these figures are comparable to those observed at other universities, such as Leipzig (De la Croix and Stelter 2022b), Tübingen (De la Croix and Stelter 2022c), Heidelberg (De la Croix and Stelter 2022a), and Prague (Gkopi and Stelter 2023b). From the Reformation onwards, the completeness of scholar records significantly improved. While the share of scholars with a VIAF record ranged between 70% and 80%, we observe a notable drop off in the fraction of scholars with both a VIAF and a Wikipedia page around 1700, indicating a decline over the period 1686–1733.

Period	no. obs	birth date	known place	mean age at appoint.	mean age at death	med. dist. birth-univ.	with Wiki.	with VIAF
1450–1526	544	15.4%	94.1%	29.6	57.7	82	8.5%	15.1%
1527–1617	234	65%	79.1%	31.7	61.1	173	25.6%	74.4%
1618–1685	149	86.6%	82.6%	34.3	62.6	201	17.4%	79.9%
1686–1733	108	79.6%	81.5%	36	66.7	166	11.1%	61.1%
1734–1800	160	80.6%	78.8%	35.7	64	112	31.2%	71.9%
1200–1800	1195	48.5%	86.5%	33.5	62.5	110	16.2%	46.5%

Table 1: Summary statistics by period

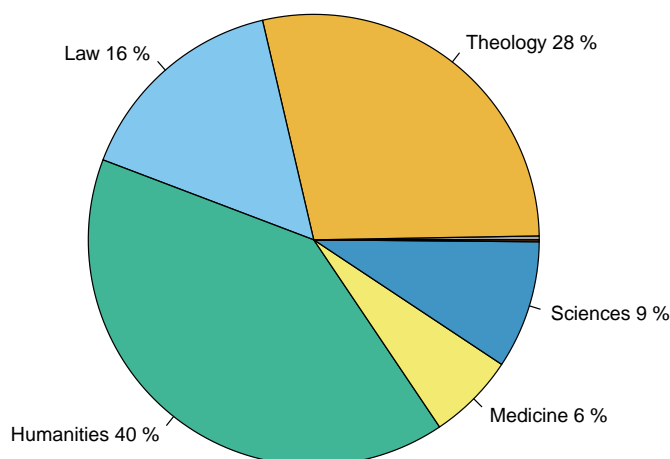


Figure 1: Broad fields at the University of Ingolstadt (published scholars only)

While early scholars were predominantly local, between 1527 and 1617 the median distance between birthplaces and the university peaked, reflecting an influx of scholars from various parts of Europe (see also Figure 2). Afterwards, the distance declined and by the 18th century, the scholar population was once again centered around Central Europe. The mean age at death, averaging 62.5 years, falls within the typical range for universities of this period (Stelter, De la Croix, and Myrskylä 2021), though often on the higher end. A similar trend applies to the age at appointment, which aligns with values observed at universities such as Freiburg (Gkopi and Stelter 2023a) and Heidelberg (De la Croix and Stelter 2022a).

## 4 FIELDS

Figure 1 illustrates the distribution of teaching disciplines among scholars who ever published at least one work. The humanities covering the Faculty of Arts clearly dominate, accounting for 40%.

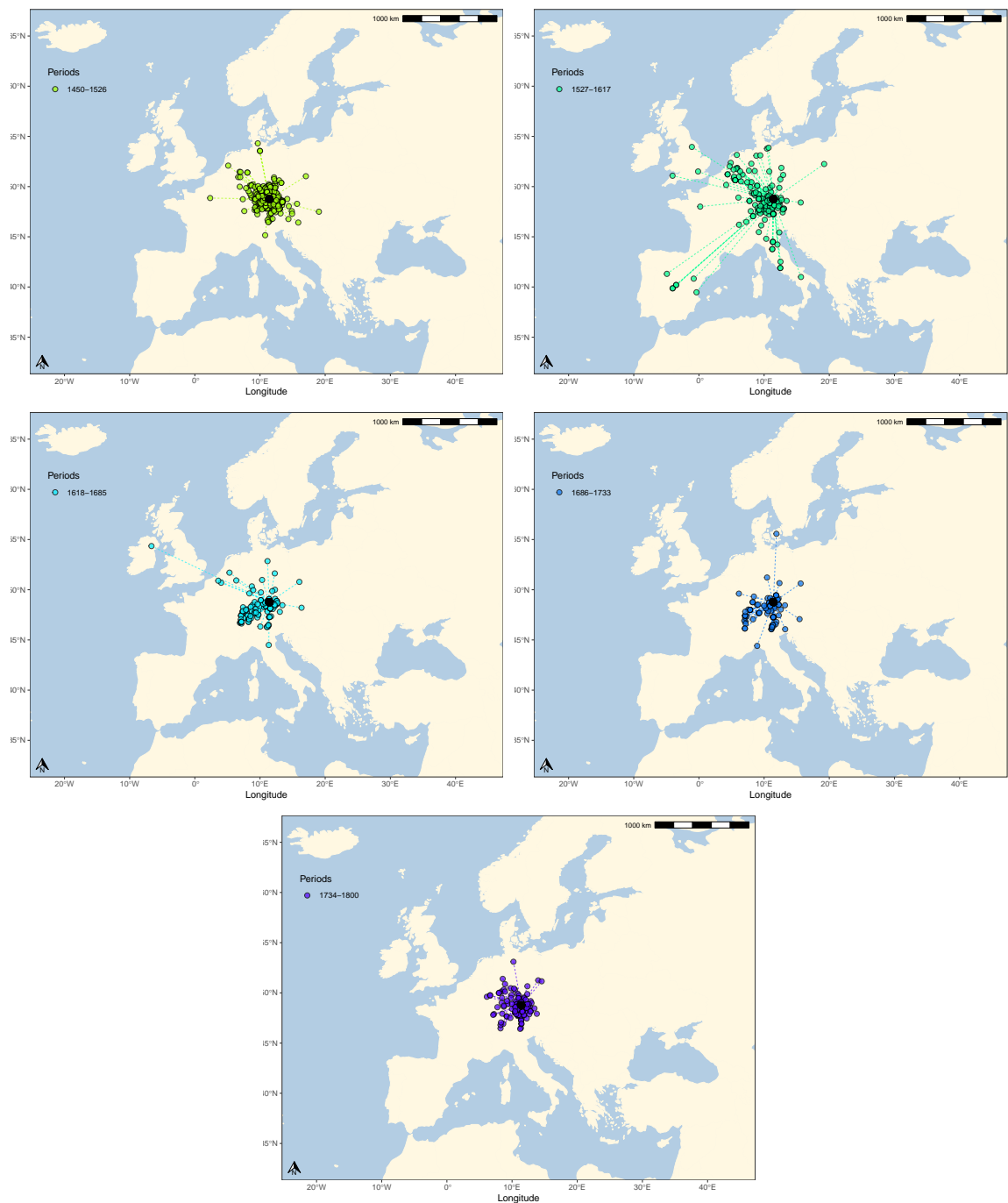


Figure 2: Places of birth of the scholars and literati at the University of Ingolstadt

This is followed by fields associated with the three traditional higher faculties: Theology (28%), Law (15%), and Medicine (6%). Notably, nearly one in ten scholars is also linked to Sciences, indicating a significant presence in natural sciences.

## 5 PLACES OF BIRTH

Figure 2 displays the documented birthplaces of scholars active at the University of Ingolstadt across different periods. In its early years, up until 1526, the university primarily attracted local scholars, with only a small number coming from the Benelux region, France, northern Germany, and Austria. Its attractiveness grew significantly in the following period, drawing scholars from a much wider geographic range, including Spain, Italy, and the United Kingdom, until the disruption caused by the Thirty Years' War. During and after the war, the university experienced a dramatic decline in attractiveness, with most scholars arriving from the southwest of Germany. From the late 17th century onwards, birthplaces became more geographically diverse, though scholars still tended to come from relatively close locations.

## 6 HUMAN CAPITAL OF SCHOLARS AND LITERATI

For each person in the database, we compute a heuristic human capital index, identified by combining information from VIAF and Wikipedia, using principal component analysis. We also compute the notability of the university at each date by averaging the human capital of the five best scholars active in Ingolstadt 25 years before that date. The details are given in Curtis and De la Croix (2023). Figure 3 shows the names of all the scholars with a positive human capital index. The orange line displays the notability of the university, based on how well-published its top scholars were.

Following its establishment in 1459, the University of Ingolstadt quickly gained attractiveness, reaching a notability level of 6. The sixteenth century marked a scientific boom, with all six top scholars active in Ingolstadt during this period. However, the university experienced an initial decline in the mid-sixteenth century, followed by a further drop at the century's end – preceding the disruptive impact of the Thirty Years' War. Although the university recovered in terms of its aggregated human capital index from the mid-17th century onward, the index continued to decline permanently. This reduced attractiveness coincided with being drawn from a much closer geographic range, as shown in Figure 2. By the end of the period, the index rebounded to 5, yet it never regained the heights achieved in the sixteenth century.

## 7 TOP 6 PROFESSORS

We provide here a brief overview of the six professors with the highest human capital index.

**Petrus Canisius** (Nijmegen 1521 — Fribourg 1597) was a Jesuit theologian and a key figure of the Counter-Reformation in Germany and Switzerland. He joined the Society of Jesus in 1543 and taught in Cologne before moving to Messina, where he helped establish the first Jesuit college. He later became a professor at the University of Ingolstadt and taught in Vienna, playing a major role in the Catholic resurgence against Protestantism. As the author of the first Catholic catechism after the Reformation, he contributed to religious education and clergy formation. A trusted advisor to popes and emperors, he preached actively and took part in the Council of Trent. Canonized in 1925 and declared a Doctor of the Church, he is regarded as the "second Apostle of Germany" after Saint Boniface.



Figure 3: Famous scholars and university notability (orange)

**Johannes Reuchlin** (Pforzheim 1455 – Liebenzell 1522) was a German humanist and expert in ancient languages, particularly Latin, Greek, and Hebrew. An advisor to the Dukes of Württemberg, he played a key role in defending Jewish texts against their destruction, which put him in conflict with the Inquisition and the Dominicans of Cologne during the Pfefferkorn affair (1510-1515). A strong advocate for Christian Kabbalah (a mystical tradition blending elements of Jewish Kabbalah with Christian theology), he wrote major works such as *De Verbo Mirifico* (1494) and *De Arte Cabbalistica* (1517). He opposed Luther's Reformation and taught in Ingolstadt and Tübingen before his death.

**Johannes Eck** (Egg an der Gunz 1486 – Ingolstadt 1543) was a German theologian, a defender of Catholicism, and a major opponent of Martin Luther. A professor at the University of Ingolstadt, he participated in important theological debates such as the Leipzig Disputation (1519) against Luther. His writings, particularly *Enchiridion* (1525), criticized the reformers and defended papal authority. He played a key role in drafting the *Confutatio Augustana* (1530), a response to the Augsburg Confession (the foundational statement of Lutheran belief). Eck was a central figure in the Counter-Reformation, supporting internal reforms in the Church while fighting against Protestantism.

**Conrad Celtis** (Wipfeld 1459 – Vienna, 1508) was a German Renaissance humanist and poet, known as the Archhumanist. After studying in Cologne and Heidelberg, he traveled to Italy and across the Empire to teach and promote humanism. Named Poeta Laureatus by Frederick III, he taught in Ingolstadt, where he delivered a famous speech urging Germans to rival Italians in knowledge. Later, in Vienna under Maximilian I, he reformed education by founding the Collegium Poetarum in 1502. He played a key role in the rediscovery of ancient texts and cartography with *Germania Illustrata*, leaving a lasting impact on humanist culture in Northern Europe.

**Peter Apian** (Leisnig 1495 – Ingolstadt 1552) was a German astronomer, mathematician, and cartographer known for his contributions to cosmography and navigation. After studying in Leipzig and Vienna, he was appointed professor of mathematics at the University of Ingolstadt in 1527, where he also established a renowned printing workshop. Apianus gained favor with Emperor Charles V, who ennobled him in 1535. His major works, including *Cosmographia* (1524) and *Astronomicum Caesareum* (1540), advanced cartography and astronomy, particularly in observing comets and lunar movements for longitude calculations. He remained in Ingolstadt until his death, leaving a lasting impact on scientific education and publishing.

**Leonhart Fuchs** (Wemding 1501 – Tübingen 1566) was a Bavarian physician and botanist, considered one of the pioneers of botany alongside Hieronymus Bock and Otto Brunfels. After studying in Heilbronn and Erfurt, he obtained his doctorate from the University of Ingolstadt in 1524, where he also taught medicine. Due to religious tensions, he moved to Tübingen in 1533, where he became a professor of medicine and played a key role in reforming the university. He founded Germany's first botanical garden and published *De historia stirpium* (1542), a major work describing over 400 plant species. His legacy survives in the fuchsia plant and color, named in his honor.

## 8 UNIVERSITY NETWORK

We assume that a professor's affiliation with multiple universities throughout their career creates a connection between those institutions. Under this assumption, Figure 4 illustrates the universities associated with the University of Ingolstadt during each period. We observe the same bifurcated pattern found in the human capital index and the international character of scholars (Figure 2). From 1459 to 1526, the young University of Ingolstadt was well integrated into the network of existing universities of the time, spanning from Padua to Uppsala. This network expanded until the onset of the Thirty Years' War, reaching no fewer than 35 universities. However, a collapse followed: by the

early 18th century, only three universities (all Jesuit) remained connected—one of them being the nearby University of Dillingen. Until 1800, the network remained limited.

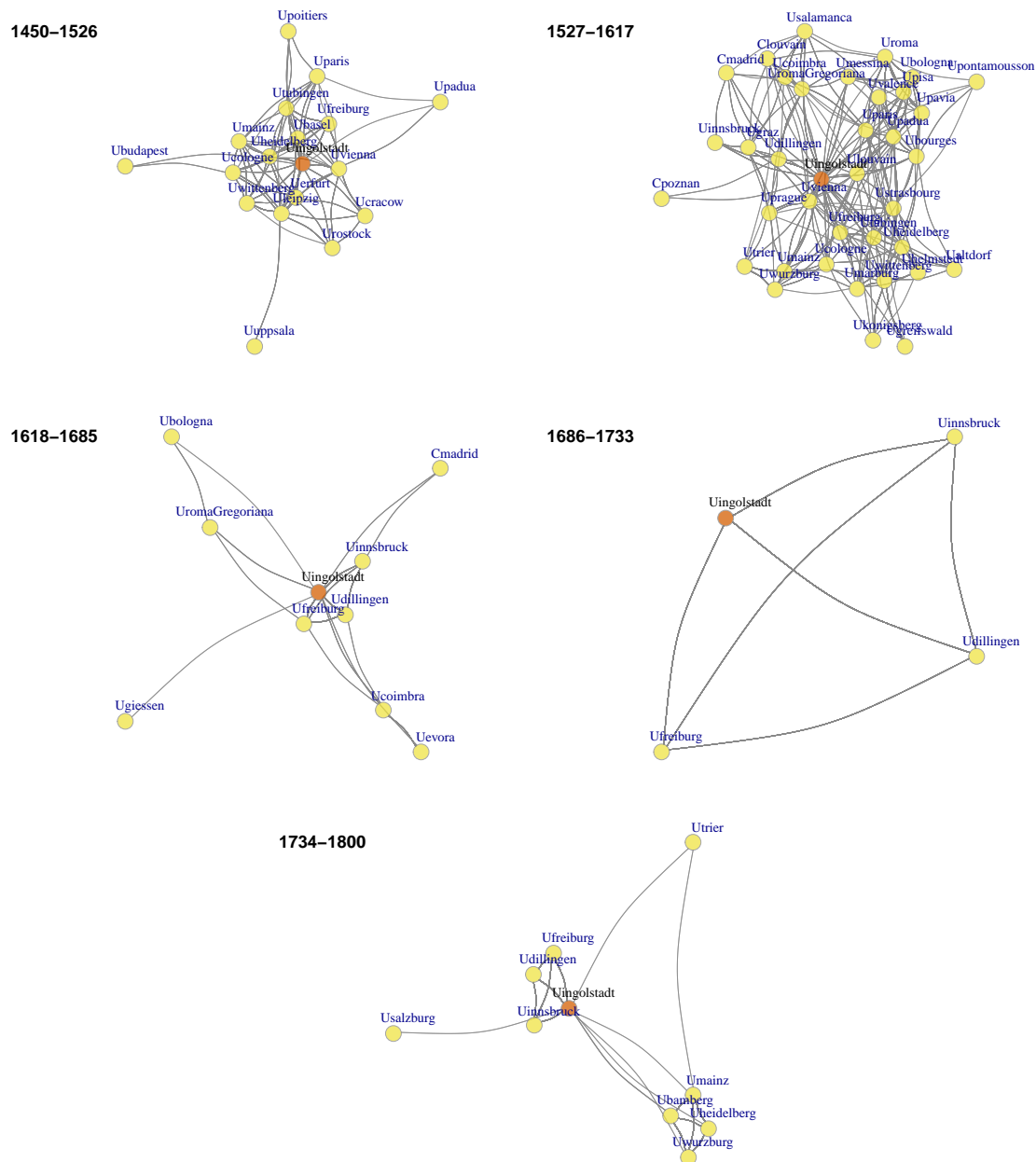


Figure 4: Links between Ingolstadt and other universities through scholars' mobility by period

## 9 FINAL THOUGHTS

The University of Ingolstadt played a crucial role in shaping Bavarian intellectual and religious life before 1800, particularly as a stronghold of Catholic education and resistance to Protestantism.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This project has received funding from the European Research Council (ERC) under the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 883033 "Did elite human capital trigger the rise of the West? Insights from a new database of European scholars." Robert Stelter acknowledges financial support from the Max Geldner Foundation.

Homepage: <https://perso.uclouvain.be/david.delacroix/uthc.html>

Database: <https://shiny-lidam.sipr.ucl.ac.be/scholars/>

First version February 23, 2025

## REFERENCES

- Curtis, Matthew, and David De la Croix. 2023. Measuring Human Capital: from WorldCat Identities to VIAF. *Repertorium Eruditorum Totius Europae* 10:17–22. <https://doi.org/10.14428/rete.v10i0/hc>.
- De la Croix, David, and Robert Stelter. 2022a. Scholars and Literati at the University of Heidelberg (1386–1800). *Repertorium Eruditorum totius Europae* 6:25–34. <https://doi.org/10.14428/rete.v6i0/heidelberg>.
- . 2022b. Scholars and Literati at the University of Leipzig (1409–1800). *Repertorium Eruditorum Totius Europae* 8:33–42. <https://doi.org/10.14428/rete.v8i0/Leipzig>.
- . 2022c. Scholars and Literati at the University of Tübingen (1477–1800). *Repertorium Eruditorum Totius Europae* 7:21–30. <https://doi.org/10.14428/rete.v7i0/Tubingen>.
- Freninger, Franz Xaver. 1872. *Das Matrikelbuch der Universität Ingolstadt-Landshut-München: Rectoren Professoren Doctoren 1472-1872, Candidaten 1772-1872* [in German]. München: Eichleiter.
- Gkopi, Anna Maria, and Robert Stelter. 2023a. Scholars and Literati at the University of Freiburg (1457–1800). *Repertorium Eruditorum Totius Europae* 9:59–68. <https://doi.org/10.14428/rete.v9i0/freiburg>.
- . 2023b. Scholars and Literati at the University of Prague (1348–1800). *Repertorium Eruditorum Totius Europae* 11:49–60. <https://doi.org/10.14428/rete.v11i0/prague>.
- Romstöck, Franz Sales. 1898. *Die jesuitennullen prantl's an der universität Ingolstadt und ihre leidensgenossen: eine biobibliographische studie* [in German]. Eichstätt: Commissions-Verlag der P. Brönnner'schen Buchhandlung.
- Schrottenberg, Hubertus von. 1979. Wissenschaftsfinanzierung (Professorenbesoldung) und das Problem der Vermögensselbstverwaltung an der Universität Ingolstadt (1472-1676) [in German]. PhD diss., Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München.
- Schwinges, Rainer Christoph, and Christian Hesse. 2019. *Repertorium Academicum Germanicum* [in German]. Consulted October 2, 2024. <https://en.rag-online.org/>.
- Sommervogel, Carlos. 1890. *Bibliothèque de la Compagnie de Jésus* [in French]. Brussels: Oscar Schepens.
- Stelter, Robert, David De la Croix, and Mikko Myrskylä. 2021. Leaders and Laggards in Life Expectancy among European Scholars from the Sixteenth to the Early Twentieth Century. *Demography* 58:111–135. <https://doi.org/10.1215/00703370-8938107>.
- Wolff, Helmut. 1973. *Geschichte der Ingolstädter Juristenfakultät: 1472-1625* [in German]. Freiburg: Duncker und Humblot.