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Inter cives necnon peregrinos

Essays in honour of Boudewijn Sirks

V&R unipress



Bibliographic information published by the Deutsche Nationalbibliothek

The Deutsche Nationalbibliothek lists this publication in the Deutsche Nationalbibliografie; detailed bibliographic data are available on the Internet at <http://dnb.d-nb.de>.

ISBN 978-3-8471-0302-8

ISBN 978-3-8470-0302-1 (E-Book)

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Printed in Germany.

Printing and binding: CPI Buch Bücher.de GmbH, Birkach



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Praefatio

Adriaan Johan Boudewijn Sirks was born on 14 September 1947 in The Hague, the Netherlands, into an academic family. His parents lived and worked, just as his grandparents had, in the Dutch East Indies. His father, a lawyer by education, was employed at the Bank of Java, his mother, an economist, at a private company. Boudewijn was born in The Hague, since his mother had returned to the Netherlands to recuperate for a time from the effects of civil internment by the Japanese. Subsequently the family was reunited in the Dutch East Indies. However, as a consequence of Indonesia becoming independent at the beginning of the fifties, the family had to leave the country once and for all and settled in the Netherlands.

Boudewijn spent his youth in the Gooi area, where he attended a grammar school in Bussum. From 1966 until 1972 he studied law at the University of Leyden where he obtained his master's degree (LL.M). For some years thereafter he studied theology (1972 – 1975) and philosophy (1975 – 1977) at the University of Amsterdam, after which he decided to embark upon a thesis. It was at that same university that he defended, on 22 June 1984, his doctoral thesis “*Qui annonae urbis serviunt*”, written under the supervision of Prof. Hans Ankum, and obtained *cum laude* the degree of *iuris utriusque doctor*. The commercial edition of the book, entitled “Food for Rome”, was published in 1991. The thesis pioneered a new perception of administrative law during the Roman Empire. Whereas previously public services, necessary for provisioning Rome and Constantinople, were considered to be from the fourth century onwards controlled by an all-embracing system of personal law hereditary occupations, entailing public obligations, Boudewijn showed that the system, rather, existed in the concerted action of a number of public organizations. Some of these aimed at the lasting preservation of assets, needed for public services, others at securing the availability of skilled workers to perform specific tasks. Moreover, the system was limited to public distributions, which provided for no more than 30 percent of the total need for food, usually less. Thus, unlike the image of a bureaucratic “Zwangstaat”, as depicted previously by Jean-Pierre Waltzing

(1857–1929), trade and profession in the Roman Empire to a great extent must have been free.

After lecturing at various Dutch universities, in July 1998 Boudewijn was appointed ordinary professor for ‘Ancient Legal History, History of European Private Law and Civil Law’ at the Johann Wolfgang Goethe University at Frankfurt am Main (Germany). This was the former chair of “Legal History and Civil Law”, previously occupied by Helmut Coing (1912–2000), the founder of the Max Planck Institute for European Legal History. The spell at Frankfurt was followed by an appointment, in February 2006, as Regius Professor of Civil Law in Oxford. Sirks was the first Dutchman to occupy this prestigious chair, established in 1540 by King Henry VIII (1491–1547). In this capacity he has distinguished predecessors, such as Alberico Gentili (1552–1608) and in more recent times David Daube (1909–1999), Tony Honoré and Peter Birks (1941–2004). During these years he moved between Friedrichsdorf (his domicile), Oxford, and The Hague, where his family lives.

From an international perspective, there are many more distinctions we can mention. In 1988 he was for a time Visiting Scholar at Columbia University, New York, and in 1997 “Rice Distinguished Visiting Professor of Law” at the School of Law of the University of Kansas. There is also his editorial work. Boudewijn was and is a member of the editorial boards of the *Journal of Legal History* (1990–2003), the *Studia Amstelodamensia ad Epigraphicam, Ius Antiquum et Papyrologicam pertinentia* (since 1994) and the *Tijdschrift voor Rechtsgeschiedenis (Legal History Review)* (since 2006). Further, he participated in the *Projet Volterra Committee* of the British Academy (1996–2004), is “correspondent” (corresponding member) of the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences (since 2002) and vice-president of the *Accademia Romanistica Costantiniana* (since 2006).

Boudewijn’s major field of investigation was and is the Roman law of Antiquity in its broadest sense, covering both private and public law from the early period of the Roman Republic until the Byzantine era, including legal papyrology. He also devotes considerable study to the reception of Roman law in Western Europe and its colonies (specifically the Dutch East Indies) from the Middle Ages until the promulgation of the German *Bürgerliche Gesetzbuch* in 1900. Within this wide scope emerge certain issues and themes, which constitute connecting threads. I mention the most important ones.

As regards classical Roman law, Sirks published various papers on the right of pledge and, extensively, on the status of Junian Latinity, more specifically on the underlying values and concepts. Building on older religious–historical studies, Boudewijn wrote about the basic principles of Roman law, which must have existed previous to the emergence of Stoic influence, i. e. in archaic Roman law. He fruitfully applied the theories on the dynamic character of Roman religion of

the Groningen, later Utrecht Professor Henrik Wagenvoort (1886 – 1976), to the authority of the tutor, noxal liability and the essence of *furtum*. In these Roman institutions we can see a reflection of religious convictions, something Wagenvoort had termed the Roman version of *mana* (supernatural authority or power). This can explain certain aspects of *furtum manifestum*, which until now have puzzled legal historians or led to explanations which could easily be refuted.

In a number of articles Boudewijn analysed the *lex Aquilia*, a Roman statute dealing with liability for damage to things. In doing so, he came to the conclusion that causality, as required in the Roman texts for liability, should be reinterpreted from the perspective of Stoic ideas; this is commonly done too strongly from the perspective of nineteenth-century theories of causality based on probability. Boudewijn also proceeded from Stoic philosophy in seeking explanations for the notion of *contractus*. At the *Convegno Internazionale di Diritto Romano* of 2010 (Copanello, 10 June), he spoke about *Contrahere et contractus*. Using etymology, he demonstrated that *contractus* developed from a unilateral, subjective legal act into a bilateral, objective legal act. This resulted in a new perception of the subdivision of obligations recorded in the Institutes of Gaius (ca. 110 – 180), a view which deviates from for example the recent explanation given by Eric Descheemaeker (University of Edinburgh).

Boudewijn also developed innovative views regarding the Roman Colonate of late Antiquity. Generally, it was and still is assumed that the fact that tenants were tied to specific tenements had resulted from the fiscal policy of Diocletian (ca. 242 – 316) and that this was characteristic for the entire empire. Diocletian would have made landowners liable for the tax arrears of their tenants. In exchange for this liability, the tenants would have been tied to the land. Boudewijn demonstrated, however, that it was not tenants, but farm labourers, who out of financial need entered into a contract with the landowner. The latter would stand surety for their debts, including poll taxes (*tributa capitis*). In return they promised to make themselves available for labour – as in the *paramoné*-agreement – which was paid for, so that their debts could be settled. These obligations were recorded in the tax registers. Moreover, this was only practised occasionally in some provinces. Thus the Colonate did not result from Diocletian's fiscal policy and neither was it an institution generally introduced in the entire empire. Boudewijn also adduced a plausible explanation for 'hereditarieness', which at first sight seems to indicate a status of restricted freedom, determined by the law of persons, but actually resulted from the general principle of *origo* (locality, domicile) as the fundament of obligations of public law. The prevailing opinion among ancient historians is now gradually coming round to these views.

Having written a number of papers on the Theodosian Code, Boudewijn in

2007 published a comprehensive monograph on this compilation of imperial constitutions, which was issued in the year 438 AD. According to the prevailing opinion, the *Codex Theodosianus* was an unfinished project to compile from archives, scattered over the entire empire, all imperial constitutions promulgated between 311 and 437. Moreover, these constitutions would, through the *Codex Theodosianus*, have acquired a general validity. Boudewijn, on the contrary, maintained that the codification project had foundered but was partially revived in order to add lustre to the marriage of Theodosius' daughter with the western emperor; that this revived Codex did not contain all constitutions promulgated between 311 and 437 but only those which in 437 were still valid; that primarily the archives of Constantinople, Rome and Ravenna were consulted; and that at the outset the validity of the constitutions remained restricted to the part of the empire they were issued for. Only in the course of the fifth century were they interpreted as more generally applicable. Initially, these propositions encountered strong resistance from both ancient and legal historians, but little by little they began to be acknowledged. As a consequence, international investigations into the Theodosian Code have made a significant step forward.

Since his appointment in Oxford Boudewijn Sirks has also become involved in the study of Byzantine law, which prompted him to criticize, in an article published in 2011, the opinion of the eminent Byzantinist Dieter Simon (1935), who in 1973 had maintained that for the Byzantine jurists of the eleventh century the Justinian codification and Justinian law as such were nothing more than rhetorical tools. That view would imply that the legal literature of that period is of no significance for the history of law. Boudewijn maintained, to the contrary, that the texts adduced by Simon cannot support his conclusions and that prominent jurists from that period still followed Justinian law as a dogmatic guideline.

The papers Sirks published in the field of Dutch legal history are usually written in Dutch and inaccessible to a wider audience. Within this field there is emphasis on certain topics, such as the legal history of Holland and Zeeland in the eighteenth century, Cornelis van Bijnkershoek (1673–1743) as a jurist (of whom he edited the last known texts), the colonial legal history of the Dutch East Indies and the legal history of the Northern Netherlands during the Batavian–French era.

This volume, intended to honour our colleague and friend Boudewijn Sirks on the occasion of his retirement, reflects these wide interests. Boudewijn's scholarly work encompasses the classical law of the Romans and the post-classical law of Roman provincials; the Roman–Dutch law in the Dutch Republic but also in the VOC–settlements abroad — and all produced by Boudewijn *inter cives* in Utrecht and Leyden *neqnon peregrinos* in Frankfurt and Oxford. The editors hope and expect that Boudewijn's emeritus status will not prevent him

from continuing this scholarly work and from participating for many years to come in the legal–historical discourse, either at The Hague, where Irene and his family reside, or in Friedrichsdorf or elsewhere abroad. It will surely render our scholarly debate more profound and lively and offer the opportunity, especially for younger colleagues, to benefit from his expertise.

On behalf of the editors

Jan Hallebeek

Publications

A.J.B. Sirks
(April 2014)

I. Books

1. Verkeerslawaai in Nederland, H.M.A. Jansen, J.M. Opschoor, A.J.B. Sirks. Muiderberg 1977.
2. *Qui annonae urbis serviunt*, Amsterdam 1984 (diss.), VIII + 714 [+ 6] p.
3. Food for Rome. The legal structure of the transportation and processing of supplies for the imperial distributions in Rome and Constantinople, [Studia Amstelodamensia XXXI], Amsterdam 1991, vi + 446 p.; reprint 's-Gravenhage 2010.
4. Ein früh-byzantinisches Szenario für die Amtswechslung in der Sitionie. Die griechischen Papyri aus Pommersfelden (PPG) mit einem Anhang über: die Pommersfeldener Digestenfragmente und die Digestenüberlieferung, hgg. von A.J.B. Sirks, P.J. Sijpesteijn und K.A. Worp [Münchener Beiträge zur Papyrusforschung und antiken Rechtsgeschichte, 88], München 1996, viii + 191 p.
5. Summaria Antiqua Codicis Theodosiani. Réédition avec les gloses publiées dans Codicis Theodosiani fragmenta Taurinensia (ed. P. Krüger), Amsterdam 1996, xii + 130 p. with disk/mit Diskette.
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- 6a. als gastredacteur: Pro Memoria 5.2 (2003) 320–394 (studiedag Koloniale Rechtsgeschiedenis te Amsterdam in 2002, publicatie van de bijdragen van J.A. Schildkamp, A.J.B. Sirks, H. den Heijer, J. Jacobs, J.A. Somers)
7. Het "Rapport van L. Taillefert en W.A. Altling betreffende het Alfabetaisch Receuil van J.J. Craan (der statutaire wetten en reglementen & a van Ne-

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mengevat door B.M. Telders, K.N. Korteweg, W.L. van Spengler, F.J. de Jong,
G.J. ter Kuile en W. van Iterson, met aanvulling van de ontbrekende sa-
menvattingen door A.J.B. Sirks, uitgegeven door A.J.B. Sirks, [Werken der
Stichting tot Uitgaaf der Bronnen van het Oud-Vaderlandse Recht no. 30],
's-Gravenhage 2005, viii + 332 p. [ISBN 90–803252–4–4]
 9. C. van Bijkershoek, W. Pauw, *Index in observationes tumultuarias*, uit-
gegeven door A.J.B. Sirks, [Werken der Stichting tot Uitgaaf der Bronnen
van het Oud-Vaderlandse Recht no. 34], 's-Gravenhage 2005, x + 58 p.
[ISBN: 90–803252–3–6]
 10. Nederland in Franse schaduw. Recht en bestuur in het Koninkrijk Holland
(1806–1810), red. J. Hallebeek, A.J.B. Sirks, Hilversum 2006, 298 p.
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 14. *Het Franse Nederland: de inlijving 1810–1813. De juridische en bes-
tuurlijke gevolgen van de 'Réunion' met Frankrijk*, red. A.M.J.V. Berkvens, J.
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chenrecht*, W.J. Zwolve, A.J.B. Sirks, Wien/Köln 2012

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2. Informal manumission and the lex Junia, RIDA 28 (1981) 247–276.
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scission d'une vente à cause de lésion énorme (*laesio enormis*), AARC 5
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