

criticized by the other authors, defends his position that the impact of the courts is frequently more based on hope and desire rather than 'hardcore evidence'. After having read the other chapters, which all come to largely opposite conclusions, this part is the most interesting of the book and forces the reader to take position. Chapter 7 by Marvin Zalman of Wayne State University adds a critique of recent works by political scientists who attempt 'juricide' by negating the impact or even existence of law. Lawyers will be consoled by his conclusion that, after all, 'law matters'. The book concludes with a vote by Michael McCann of the University of Washington in favour of new approaches in the definition of law, its role in society, and its power to trigger change, resistance, and consciousness.

A subtitle to this book could be 'Courts and Law in American Society', since it is clearly and exclusively focused on the American experience. However, after an initial disappointment at the lack of international comparative analysis, this reader discovered the wealth of doctrinal and methodological lessons which can be learned from the book and which can then be applied in a European context.

*Frank Emmert*

Petar Sarcevic and Paul Volken (eds.), **Yearbook of Private International Law, Vol. I**, The Hague/London/Boston: Kluwer Law International – in association with the Swiss Institute of Comparative Law (1999) 374 pp.

At the turn of the millennium the editors present a new periodical for intellectual exchange between specialists of private international law. They correctly predict that in spite of all efforts at the unification of substantive law, there will always be a certain divergence in legal rules on personal, family and property matters. Even in those areas where uniform law has made the most progress, in trade and commerce, the need for unification and the reality of unification are still two distinct and different animals and this is not about to change. Thus, the question whether private international law can be sent into retirement soon is clearly answered in the negative. Hence the editors invite the submission of manuscripts on theoretical and practical aspects of private international law in its widest sense, including traditional conflict of law questions, international civil procedure, as well as international cooperation between States and international organizations.

The first issue includes articles by Maarit Jänterä-Jareborg on 'Marriage Dissolution in an Integrated Europe – The 1998 European Union Convention on Jurisdiction and the Recognition and Enforcement of Judgments in Matrimonial Matters', Petar Sarcevic on 'Private International Law Aspects of Legally Regulated Forms of Non-Marital Cohabitation and Registered Partnerships', Hans-Ulrich Jessurun d'Oliveira on 'The Artifact of Sham Marriages', and Paul Volken on 'How Common are the General Principles of Private International Law? America and Europe Compared'. Furthermore, there are five 'National Reports' on recent

important developments in the private international law of Venezuela, Switzerland, China, Hungary and Germany. 'News from The Hague', several shorter articles and a section with 'Texts, Materials and Recent Development' and 'Book Reviews', complete the issue. Last but not least, there is a very useful subject-matter index.

One may question the need for yet another periodical, as well as the suitability of a yearbook for an area which has increasingly seen dynamic and rapid development, but the expertise of the editors and the general quality of workmanship of the first issue will ensure that this work finds its place as an important publication in the area of private international law.

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