Ulric Huber (1636-1694) : 'De ratione juris docendi & discendi diatribe per modum dialogi :nonnullis aucta paralipomenois' : with a translation and commentary
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This project had its origin in a proposal made to me some years ago by the late Prof. Theo Veen of the University of Amsterdam. We envisaged my providing the Latin text of Ulric Huber’s *De Ratione discendi et docendi iuris, diatribe per modum dialogi*, the 1688 version, included at the back of Huber’s *Digressiones Justinianeae* (1688), together with a parallel text, English translation, appropriate footnotes, and an introduction containing brief résumés of the lives of the principal characters participating in the debate. This was to be a small volume on the lines of Veen’s *Ulrici Huber Oratio* III.

However, as I worked on the *Dialogus* it became clear that this was no freestanding oration which could be treated more or less in isolation. Rapidly the parameters widened, the issues to be considered multiplied and my commentary grew exponentially. It became necessary to probe the identity of the speakers, Johann Friedrich Böckelmann, and Georgius Conradus Crusius and to verify the authenticity of the views expressed by them. Where and when did the *Dialogus* take place, if it was a narrative based on fact? And most significantly, in how far were the views expressed by Huber, in his own persona, a true reflection of his didactic policy, a question which necessitated reading other of his orations and writings, especially the prefaces and introductions to certain of his didactic works. In how far were his ideas revolutionary or were they a variation of the traditional approach? What did Huber say here, and elsewhere, about disputations, textual emendation and the Humanistic approach to law? Finally, in how far were the views attributed to Böckelmann and Crusius, those of Huber himself or was there another speaker behind the scenes? In short what were Huber’s motives in publishing, what was the significance of the “non appearing” Noodt, and what effect, if any, did this *Dialogus* have? Peripheral issues relate to the Dialogue form and its use by the 17th century jurists, the use of compendia in university teaching, literary comment and the teasing question of the Dieterich ‘loose leaves’. A certain amount of background information, especially on the teaching of law, was necessary, but inevitably this was selected purely with a view to illuminating the *Dialogus*.

There is little mention made of the *Dialogus* in secondary literature. The great contemporary authority on Huber was Prof. Veen and his spoken and written words provided me with a treasure house of background information. Prof. Robert Feenstra in his article on Böckelmann treats of the *Dialogus* in passing, as does Prof. Govaert van den Bergh in his comments on Noodt and Huber. To these three scholars I owe a significant debt.

Consequently, my chief understanding of Huber’s intentions in writing and publishing this dialogue is drawn from 17th century printed material, especially prefaces and addresses to the readers, both in the works of Huber himself and in those of others. Similarly, funeral orations, used with reasonable discretion and a pinch of salt, can provide useful biographical information and, to a moderate extent, a contemporary evaluation of the deceased. Manuscript material, in the form of draft articles and private letters, has not proved illuminating in the case of the *Dialogus*. Neither Veen nor I could trace any preliminary draft of the *Dialogus* and the plethora of letters cited in Veen’s *Recht en Nut* do not concern the matter of the *Dialogus*.

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1 For Veen’s written work on Huber see Bibliography III.
2 Feenstra Böckelmann, p 142.
3 Van den Bergh Noodt, pp 54-55, 165-166, 300-304.
Each and every work of research owes much to those who aid and support the writers. The dedicated staff who man institutions, libraries and archives, both in Cape Town and in the Netherlands have been generous with advice and help and prompt in providing books from special collections, documents and various source materials.

Here I must first mention the staff of the Van Zyl Library at the University of Cape Town. Without its collection of antiquarian legal material, research into European (and South African) legal history and translation would be almost impossible for those of us — “the few who hew” and “all fellow-workers” in the quarry — who toil in the remoteness of Southern Africa. May I mention Prof. I. Leeman, for many years presiding deity over the collection, and Mrs Tanya Barben of the Special Collections, Mrs Amanda Barratt, erstwhile chief Law Librarian, Mrs Pamela Snyman who guides the library, its staff and above all its users over many a rough patch; and all the others — librarians, Ms. Dilshaad Brey, and Mr Lubabalo Booi, Library assistant Ms. Zoelfa Jaffer, and departmental assistants Mrs Jasmine Ismail, and Mr Raymond de Wet. To them all a sincere thank you.

While I am mentioning South Africans I must include an ex-student Mr Mark Hermans, now lecturing at the University of the Western Cape. His competence with the web has solved a number of minor, but significant, problems. And last but not least the Hon. Ian Farlam of the High Court of Appeal Bloemfontein and Honorary Professor of Law at UCT.

At the Library of Tresoar-Frysk Historysk en Letterkundich Sintrum, Leeuwarden I am especially indebted to Dr Jacob van Sluis, the Conservator Oude Drukken for his friendly help regarding the replacement-leaves in the 1684 edition of the Dialogus, for facilitating my visit to Franeker, to the house once owned by Ulrich Huber and to the museum Martena, also for giving me a copy of his book on Herman Alexander Röell with its keen perception of the Duker promotion and Huber’s reaction to it. Only those who must wrestle with library copies of reference books can appreciate the pleasure of one’s own copy at hand whenever needed. Thank you again. At the Streekarchief Rijnlands Midden, (Groenehart Archieven) my thanks are due to Mr Arjan van ’t Riet who provided Prof Jan Hallebeek with essential information about Böckelmann’s property at Hazerswoude.

As always the Librarians of the University of Leiden, the University of Amsterdam and the VU University Amsterdam were unstinting in the information they provided when approached by their Dutch colleagues on behalf of an unknown researcher in Cape Town. My personal investigations into the Huber antecedents were profitable thanks to the Staatsarchiv, Zurich.

When it comes to extracting relevant and elusive material from archives I can only bow before Dr Regina Sprenger who spent many hours successfully tracing and extracting source material which substantiated much of my argument. Both she and her husband Prof. Paul Nève have a wide range of contacts in academia who were called upon to help. Among others I thank Prof. Dr J.J.V.M. de Vet of the Radboud University, Nijmegen.

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4 The Hon. Percival Gane in his dedication to Gane Voet, and Gane Jurisprudence.
5 See Chapter II.1.
Preface

Smidt, Prof. Hans Ankum, Prof. T. Wallinga, Prof. Boudewijn Sirks, presently Regius Professor of Civil Law at Oxford. Prof. Bernard Stolte for aid with Greek accents; from Scotland, Prof. John Cairns whom I must especially thank for sharing with me the Dieterich loose leaves,7 and in that regard also Dr Douglas Osler, with his deep wells of bibliographical knowledge; also Prof. Cairns’ contacts in the Advocates’ Library and among the archivists in the London School of Economics. Latterly Mrs Dr Hylkje de Jong of the VU University, Amsterdam, has stepped to the fore and provided considerable assistance, especially checking information originating from Tresoar, Leeuwarden. My grateful appreciation of their help.

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From the beginning Prof. Theo Veen shared the supervising of the research with Prof. Jan Hallebeek of the VU University Amsterdam and after the untimely death of Prof. Veen in September 2005, Prof. Hallebeek continued with the assistance of Prof. John Cairns of the University of Edinburgh as second promoter.

7 See Chapter II.