


Out Now: Briggs, Private International Law in English Courts, 2nd edition

In 2014, Adrian Briggs published his own comprehensive account of English Private International Law, taking stock of centuries of English case law and decades of growing European influence. Other than the author's unique ability to present even the most complex concepts with both clarity and style, the book's strongest selling point arguably was his conscious decision to put the European instruments at the front and centre of the book, presenting English private international law as the hybrid system that it had long become. As Adrian Briggs later admitted, though, the timing of this project could be described as sub-optimal. 

Indeed, in light of the UK's subsequent departure from the EU and the resulting 'realignment of the planets', the second edition required changes that went far beyond a mere update. While some parts of the first edition that engaged with European sources and materials could be preserved as historical background (see, eg, pp. 18-21; 123) or even as descriptions of what has now become 'retained EU law' (mainly the Rome I and II Regulations, and with important caveats), other parts had to be rewritten almost entirely. This is most notable in the chapter on Jurisdiction (ch. 3), which according to the author, is now subject to 'a *corpus iuris* which is a shambles', 'a mess in urgent need of reform' (p. 129).

It is all the more commendable that Adrian Briggs has undertaken this difficult and presumably depressing task to paint, for the second time, a full picture of English private international law as it stands, again drawing heavily from his decades of experience as an author, teacher, and practitioner. It seems fair to say that most of the apparent coherence of this picture is testimony not to the ease with which European instruments, rules and thoughts could be removed from English law but to the author's ability to patch up what was left.

(As a footnote, it is a pity for the reader that not only much European law but also the paragraph numbers have been lost between the first and second edition.)