

## PREFACE

The contributions to the present volume of the *Subseciva Groningana* have been written to pay tribute to the person and the work of Nicolaas van der Wal on the occasion of his 65th birthday and his consequent departure from active academic life. Nico van der Wal spent the greater part of his scholarly life in editing the *Basilica*. This gigantic task had been undertaken by the late H.J. Scheltema, who readily admitted that the work would never have been finished but for the collaboration of Nico van der Wal and Douwe Holwerda. The patient monk's work of reading and transcribing the manuscripts made Nico van der Wal an expert in the characteristics of Graeco-Roman legal language and gave him a unique insight into the workings of Early Byzantine and especially Justinianic law. His numerous publications, a bibliography of which is appended to this volume, bear witness to his deep erudition. His book on Justinian's Novels, the *Manuale Novellarum*, in particular is still an indispensable companion for every student of Justinianic law after the completion of the Digest and Code in 529/534. It established his reputation as the greatest living expert in this field. For this reason the *novella constitutio* is the central theme of this *liber amicorum*. It contains contributions of friends and colleagues who all have occupied themselves with an aspect of the Novel.

This collection of studies would never have reached its present form without the help of several people in the Department of Legal History of the University of Groningen. In particular we wish to thank Lia Scheffer who typed the manuscripts, Rinse Brink who wrestled with the technical problems, and Tom van Bochove who compiled the bibliography. It goes without saying that we have not called upon the assistance of Nico van der Wal; volume IV of the *Subseciva Groningana* has gone without the supervision of a valued member of the Editorial Board, to whom we should say in the words of the Emperor Valentinian: 'Optamus te felicissimum et florentissimum per multos annos bene valere, illustris antecessor'.

J.H.A. Lokin  
B.H. Stolte