

## PREFACE

*WHEN my colleague and friend, Agustín Gordillo, proposed to me to preface his new book An Introduction to Law, a work that, I am sure will be read and discussed around the world, I felt truly honoured. This idea was the result of a long-standing friendship.*

*I had the opportunity to get to know the author in the beginning of the '80s during my early scientific days. We met at a Conference in Louvain-La Neuve, as Agustín Gordillo has always followed the European administrative science very closely. Common backgrounds and interests became the cradle of mutual esteem, recognition and later friendship. We both come from countries neither of which are among those considered to be the metropolis of administrative law, our common science. We both have strong ties and years of presence in a country which is one of the metropolises of administrative law, France where we share more or less the same experience. We both have strong interest and iter in practice, in public administration as well as before the Courts.*

*I was directed to becoming better acquainted with Agustín Gordillo by my Professor Jean Rivero, a man of unparalleled science and character, who was very often referring to his colleague and friend from Argentina, and to their productive talks on comparative administrative law.*

*In those years, Jean Rivero, known worldwide as an excellent administrative lawyer whose book Précis de droit administratif was perhaps the most read in French-speaking circles around the world, was among the founders of comparative administrative law in post-war France. He had a genuine interest in other administrative law systems and a strong wish to preserve the importance and presence of French administrative law around the globe. Through his courses in comparative administrative law, he became the educator of many Latin Americans, and although Gordillo had never been his pupil, he was the man with whom Rivero could dialogue and through whom he had the opportunity to better learn the most recent evolutions of administrative law in Argentina and Latin America in general.*

*This never slipped my mind, and when, years later, we, a handful of European public lawyers, took the initiative to found the European Group of Public Law with the aim to contribute to the development of public law in Europe and worldwide, it was only natural to invite Agustín Gordillo to our works, so that the Jean Rivero's spirit would go on.*

*Agustín Gordillo has written extensively in Latin America and world-wide numerous manuals, books, articles, essays, etc. However, Agustín Gordillo's new book is different from his previous works. The difference lies within the content as well as within the style.*

*This book is not another essay on administrative law. It is a book dealing with the true essence of law in general, legal studies, the relation between theory and practice in law; in a few words, this book reflects all the experience and the wisdom of a man who is already in an advanced stage of his legal career and feels ready to share with the world his findings in a lifelong learning process about law.*

*This also necessarily influences the style of the book, which becomes, to a great extent, autobiographic. The author feels the need to tell his colleagues in science about himself and how he came to reach the conclusions expressed in the book; how he studied, where he worked, how he combined professorship with practice, how he came to find the truth about law thanks to his exposure to reality through practice, how he had the opportunity to decide cases as an international judge, and the opportunity to discover, as an invited intern of the French Conseil d'Etat, how that famous institution has a quite pragmatic approach to law.*

*In fact, with this book, Agustín Gordillo proves himself thoroughly as the scientific result of that internship. The famous French institution that he admires so much, left its stamp on the man who grew as an internationally known administrative lawyer and knows that law cannot grow but in the fields of reality.*

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