The Cambridge Companion to
International Law

This intellectually ambitious introduction to international law encourages readers to engage with multiple aspects of the topic: as ‘law’ directing and shaping its subjects; as a technique for governing the world of states and beyond statehood; and as a framework within which several critical and reformist projects are articulated. The chapters situate international law in its historical and ideological context and examine core concepts such as sovereignty, jurisdiction and the state. Attention is also given to its operation within international institutions and in dispute settlement, and a separate section is devoted to international law’s ‘projects’: protecting human rights, eradicating poverty, the conservation of resources, the regulation of international trade and investment and the establishment of international order. The diverse group of contributors draws from disciplinary orientations ranging from positivism to post-modernism to ensure that this book is informed theoretically and politically, as well as grounded in practice.

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The Cambridge Companion to International Law

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Preface

This study was conceived and planned in 2008–2009 when we were colleagues at Cambridge, during Martti’s tenure as Goodhart Distinguished Professor of Law. We were able to discuss some of the contributions in draft at a mini-conference held at the Lauterpacht Centre for International Law in February 2010.

In selecting authors for the Companion, we sought to incorporate a wide range of views, including interdisciplinary and critical approaches, as well as ensuring a reasonable coverage of the various sub-fields of international law. As the reader will observe, the discipline/profession of international law is approached in different ways by different scholars: the subject looks subtly (and sometimes unsubtly) different from India or the United States or Australia than it does from different parts of Europe or Africa. We would have wished for an even more catholic range of contributors, but the demands of space and time precluded this.

We are grateful to Cambridge University Press, notably the responsible subject editor, Sinead Moloney, for a judicious combination of support, encouragement and patience. Much of the editorial burden fell on our graduate student at NYU and Cambridge, Surabhi Ranganathan, to whom we owe a lot. Lesley Dingle produced an admirable guide to electronic sources of international law; the guide is also available at the website of the Squire Law Library* where the links will be periodically updated: they were correct when the manuscript was submitted to the Press.

JRC/MK
26 June 2011

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