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MEMORANDUM

TO: Executive Council, American Society of International Law
FROM: 2018 Book Awards Committee
Date: January 10, 2018
RE: ASIL 2018 Book Awards Committee Report and Recommendations

The ASIL Book Awards Committee recommends three books for the 2018 ASIL book awards. These represent one prizewinner in each of the three categories: “Preeminent Contribution to Creative Scholarship,” “Specialized Area of International Law,” and “High Technical Craftsmanship and Utility to Lawyers and Scholars.” We supply a brief paragraph for each book, explaining the basis for our decision.

1. In the category “Preeminent Contribution to Creative Scholarship,” we selected Anthea Roberts, *Is International Law International?* (Oxford 2017).

In this book, Professor Roberts takes us along as she chases the title’s question down an international law rabbit-hole to reveal a topsy-turvy world in which international law is parochial and the invisible college is rendered visible. Roberts turns a beguilingly simple question into a globe-trotting, multi-method quest for a map of international law’s players and meanings. Simultaneously irreverent and serious-minded, Roberts develops an original research agenda that takes her and the reader through the migratory flows of international lawyers around the world, the divergent methods through which they are educated, and the different professional tracks through which they are socialized. The book does not just dissolve international law’s myths of universality; it is a nascent sociology of the field of international law and the beginning of a new field of comparative international law. In an era in which Western dominance over international law no longer looks certain, this book provides the tools for a more nuanced understanding of international law’s politics, revealing the deeper meanings and stakes of current debates.

2. In the category “Specialized Area of International Law,” we selected Daniel Bodansky, Jutta Brunnée, and Lavanya Rajamani, *International Climate Change Law* (Oxford 2017).

In a foreword to this book, the authors remark that “international climate change law presents a moving target.” Indeed, a field buffeted by sharp political controversies, entrenched economic interests, complex evolving science, global inequalities, and urgent advancing deadlines presents a formidable area of study. The authors rise to the challenge, bringing their many collective decades of experience to bear in developing a remarkably clear and cohesive overview of the field. Indeed, the authors develop the parameters of the field as they review it,

offering an account of its origins; analysis of the key conventions of the climate change regime (specifically the Framework Convention on Climate Change, Kyoto Protocol and Paris Agreement), and their corresponding institutions; as well as private, sub-national, and polycentric climate change governance regimes; and intersections between climate change and areas like trade, human rights law, and migration. We were particularly struck by the authors' capacity to weave both authoritative analysis of legal rules and a nuanced understanding of practical and political factors into a comprehensive and eminently accessible account. The elements add up to a timely and extraordinarily useful guide that will be relevant for scholars, practitioners, students, and legal architects alike.

3. In the category "High Technical Craftsmanship and Utility to Lawyers and Scholars," we selected Jürgen Basedow, Giesela Rühl, Franco Ferrari, and Pedro de Miguel Asensio, *Encyclopedia of Private International Law* (Edward Elgar 2017).

This is a mammoth (four volume) study published by Edward Elgar, with contributions from 195 authors representing 57 nations. As the editors suggest, private international law since World War II has "moved from the outskirts of the legal system to its centre." However, neither legal education nor academic discourse has fully kept up with the developments. The purpose of the *Encyclopedia* is therefore to "improve the availability of information about private international law and to present the field from a global and comparative perspective." The nearly 250 substantive entries (Volumes 1 and 2) and 80 national reports (Volume 3), both current to 2016, include sections by many of the world's top scholars and practitioners of private international law. The consummate practicality of the work is emphasized by Volume 4, which contains a highly useful collection of legal instruments of private international law, and by the fact that the entire work is accessible at [Elgaronline](#). While the focus may be European, the scope is global, reflecting the diversity of contributors and the trading nations in which they reside. Given the continuing expansion of the global economy through increased global trade, we believe the value and timeliness of this work to academics, international lawyers and others is difficult to over-state.

It was an honor to have the opportunity to read so many excellent books in our field. We were impressed by the high level of scholarship and inspired by the commitment of these authors to advancing the state of our discipline.

Respectfully submitted,

ASIL 2018 Book Awards Committee
Margaret deGuzman (Chair)
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