Editor's Preface to the Second Edition

The first edition of this *Research Handbook* was prepared a decade ago as an effort to provide a work that locates theory and history of international law in a relatively comprehensive perspective, whether in purely legal or inter-disciplinary terms, and thus enables scholars and students to refer to it as a useful starting point for identifying and examining the relevant issues of theory and history. This second edition of the *Research Handbook* again brings together scholarly input by a group of academics with acknowledged expertise in the relevant areas of the theory and history of international law. It follows and consolidates upon the priority we had a decade ago with the first edition: as no single volume could encompass all theoretical trends and historical approaches, we prefer to focus on those theories and developments that possess timeless relevance and go directly to the basic concepts; categories of the international legal system; and its feasibility in the world driven by power politics. By defining our focus in this way, this *Research Handbook* is also unique in enabling the reader to see the connection between theory and practice.

The first part of the volume is dedicated to the essence and development of international legal theory and focuses on major theoretical developments since the era of classical scholarship of international law. The second part focuses on theorising particular branches, or areas, of international law. The third part focuses on the history of international law from the medieval age up to our times.

Individual chapters provide thoughtful and focused analysis of pertinent issues and demonstrate how the international legal discourse can benefit from historical and inter-disciplinary perspectives to enable us to comprehend the multiple aspects of the complex system of international law. They also provide perspectives as to the limits of such analysis and the need to focus on the legal dimension in the first place so that the legal nature of international law is not obscured. While individual chapters serve a common purpose as part of the single comprehensive scholarly effort, they are still individually pursued efforts; now as before, no homogenisation or unification of methods and approaches has been attempted or undertaken. This is all the more important as the second edition of the first comprehensive effort in theory and history of international law also has to benefit from its representation of the richness of multiple methods and approaches and thereby gain an enhanced importance to provide a platform for further developing the discourse on theory and history of international law.

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