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Chiara Giorgetti, the editor (and co-author) of *The Rules, Practice and Jurisprudence of International Courts and Tribunals*, describes the aim of the book as “to present the main adjudicatory bodies in a way that is both accessible and comprehensive.” Indeed, the proliferation and growing complexity of international dispute settlement mechanisms on one hand, and the role they play in the international legal order on the other, make this task particularly actual and relevant.

The book consists of nineteen chapters, written by a team of several authors, composed of both distinguished academics and experienced practitioners. It examines the main courts, tribunals, and other judicial bodies operating today on the international plane. The starting point of this examination is identification of the characteristics that define an international court or tribunal. Even though they appear to be a heterogeneous group (with no common rules on jurisdiction or procedure) they share at least five features: they enjoy the power to issue decisions legally binding upon the parties to a dispute; they are constituted by instruments governed by international law; they apply international law to resolve disputes; their members (exercising judicial functions) are independent and act in their own personal capacities; and other members of their staff are also independent international agents. Bodies fulfilling these criteria are featured in the book as “international courts and tribunals”. This demonstrates the authors’ functional-structural approach to defining an international court. It is not necessary that the words “court” or “tribunal” are used in the institutions’ official name (e.g. UN Compensation Commission – Ch. XVII).

The structure of the particular chapters reflects a deliberate, systemic concept of the book. As a rule, each chapter explores a different court or tribunal. The exceptions, where several institutions are described together in a single chapter, concern administrative tribunals of international organizations (Ch. VI), hybrid/internationalised criminal tribunals (Ch. X), and bodies established by regional economic integration agreements (Ch. XVI). To the extent possible, the chapters follow a similar scheme. They start
with a general overview of the institution (including, where relevant, its history or a more detailed explanation of its origins), then examine its jurisdiction and procedures. This is followed by a review of the jurisprudence of the court/tribunal, which is done either by reference to the most significant problems emerging in the case-law (we may call this a substantial approach) or by reference to the most significant cases, or by a combination of these two methods. Each chapter closes with conclusions. This schematic construction well serves the aim of accessibility and clarity of the contents and facilitates comparisons between different adjudicatory bodies.

The chapters are grouped under six sub-headings according to the subject matter jurisdiction of the courts and tribunals concerned. The first sub-heading, *Courts and Tribunals of General Jurisdiction*, include chapters devoted to the International Court of Justice (Ch. I) as well as to the Permanent Court of Arbitration (PCA) (Ch. II). It may seem surprising to find these two quite conceptually different institutions joined together, the ICJ being the very definition of an international court of law, while the PCA constitutes a merely institutional framework to promote and facilitate the use of arbitration as a dispute resolution method. They both, however, are the only fora with truly general jurisdiction, namely the power to hear any legal dispute that the parties bring before them.

The second sub-heading, *Courts and Tribunals of Specialized Jurisdiction* covers an even more varied group of institutions, such as the International Centre for Settlement of Investment Disputes (Ch. III), the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea (Ch. IV), the World Trade Organization system (Ch. V) and administrative tribunals of international organizations (Ch. VI). As the remaining sub-titles bring together bodies that enjoy jurisdiction over similar subject matters, it must be admitted that this second sub-heading simply features institutions that would not fit in elsewhere in the book. Their only common characteristic is that their jurisdiction is not general. This fact, however, does not in any way decrease the quality and importance of the analyses concerning each of them.

As noted above, the remaining groups are distinguished in more foreseeable way. The third sub-heading provides the reader with a presentation of *Specialized Courts: International Criminal Courts and Tribunals*, including International Criminal Court (Ch. VII), the International Criminal Tribunals for the Former Yugoslavia (Ch. VIII) and for Rwanda (Ch. IX) respectively, as well as an overview of hybrid and internationalized tribunals (Ch. X), with the Special Court for Sierra Leone, Cambodian Extraordinary Chambers or Special Tribunal for Lebanon among them. However, reference to the latter group of institutions may be questionable, taking into consideration their legal status and function. It seems that the prevailing reason for their inclusion was again subject matter jurisdiction: violations of international criminal law.

Under the fourth sub-heading, *Specialized Courts: Human Rights*, we find chapters concerning the European Court of Human Rights (Ch. XI), the Inter-American Court and Commission of Human Rights (Ch. XII), and the African human rights system (Ch. XIII).
This section is followed by chapters presenting Specialized Courts: Regional Economic and Political Integration Agreements (fifth sub-heading), including the European Union Courts (Ch. XIV), the NAFTA Court (Ch. XV) and an overview of other judicial bodies established by regional agreements (Ch. XVI, featuring the Andean Community, Mercosur, COMESA, and CAFTA-DR).

The final chapters, contained under the sixth sub-heading, refer to International Ad-Hoc Tribunals and Claim Commissions, and explore the UN Compensation Commission (Ch. XVII), the Iran-US Claims Tribunal (Ch. XVIII) and the Claims Resolution Tribunal (Ch. XIX).

The efforts of Ch. Giorgetti and her co-authors deserve great appreciation. The number of the institutions examined by them is impressive. Of course one can always argue that this or that one could have been more elaborated, requires deeper analysis etc. But in fact, each of the presented bodies in of themselves could be a separate monograph, and most of them are the subjects of more than one. The special value of this book lies precisely in the fact that it gathers the presentation of the main international courts and tribunals into one volume, giving a coherent picture of the system international adjudication. Thanks to its disciplined, systemic structure (for which the editor deserves special credit), it facilitates the possibility to compare the institutions presented and draw analogies and trace differences between them. It can serve as either an academic textbook or a practitioner’s manual. Despite its broad scope, this book offers much more than a simple overview of international judicial institutions and the rules that govern them. As it also provides an analysis of the most significant examples of their practice, it constitutes a comprehensive study on the subject of international courts and tribunals and the role that they and their jurisprudence play in the development of international law.

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