

whether the ETI concerned recognizes the “concept” of rights as predominantly understood by humanity (p. 175). This important book will hopefully catalyse interest and discussions in the international law community about humanity and ETI.

**Competing interests.** The author declares none.

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## **Transnational Commercial Disputes in an Age of Anti-Globalism and Pandemic**

**edited by Sundaresh MENON and Anselmo REYES.  
Oxford, Great Britain, and New York, USA: Hart Publishing an  
Imprint of Bloomsbury Publishing, 2023. 392 pp. Hardcover:  
£95.00; Paperback: £49.99; eBook (PDF): £85.50.  
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The pandemic commencing in late 2019 posed a great challenge to the globalizing world and transnational commercial disputes. In this book, subject experts from the Asia-Pacific region have enriched the discussions and innovatively treated the subject. The introduction is by the Chief Justice of Singapore, Sundaresh Menon, who perceives that globalization is “on the rocks” but argues for the need for better adaptation to the new challenges in order to maintain the legitimacy of both old and new institutions.

Part I, “What is an International Commercial Dispute?”, by Pak Hei Li, a Hong Kong barrister, James Allsop, Chief Justice of the Federal Court of Australia, and Samuel Walpole, an Australian barrister, is a brief overview of international commercial disputes resolution mechanisms. Part II, “The Swinging Pendulum: International Commercial Arbitration and the Rise of Specialist Commercial Courts”, by Jianping Shi from the Shanghai University of Political Science and Law and Bernard Eder from the Singapore International Commercial Court, examines the rise of specialist commercial courts in different jurisdictions. Part III, “David and Goliath: Investor-State Dispute Settlement”, by Jianjian Ye, a New York lawyer, and Anselmo Reyes from the Singapore International Commercial Court, investigate the challenges for the investor-state dispute settlement system and the way forward. Part IV, “The Perfect as the Enemy of the Good – The Importance of Finality and Certainty”, by Wilson Lui from the University of Hong Kong; Nallini Pathmanathan, Justice of the Federal Court of Malaysia; and Joanne Tan Xin Yin, Senior Assistant Registrar of the same Court, argue for the need of finality and certainty in the field of international commercial dispute resolution mechanisms in the light of the Hague Conventions of 2005 and 2019. Part V, “The Lex Mercatoria and the Convergence of International Commercial Law”, by Jason Lin, a London trainee solicitor, and Tiong Min Yeo from the Singapore Management University, examine the concept of *lex mercatoria* and how it can be developed further. Finally, Part VI, “The Impact of Covid-19”, by Cedric Yeung, a Hong Kong barrister, Douglas Jones from the Singapore International Commercial Court, and Jonathan Mance from the Astana

International Financial Centre Court examine how the pandemic changed the landscape of international commercial dispute resolution and paved the way for the future. The conclusion is written by Pamela Bookman from New York City's Fordham University and Alyssa King from Canada's Queen's University echoing the views of Justice Sundaresh Menon, that the "biggest disputes in transnational commerce would inevitably touch upon issues of global importance that go beyond the direct interests of the contracting parties – like working conditions, security concerns, taxation, inequality, and climate change (p. 340)".

This book, with new ideas for exigent times, is a rich contribution to the existing scholarship of international commercial dispute resolution.

**Competing interests.** None.

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## **Justice and International Law in Meiji Japan: The María Luz Incident and the Dawn of Modernity**

**by Giorgio Fabio COLOMBO. New York: Routledge Press, 2023. 134 pp. Hardcover: £125.00; VitalSource eBook: £39.99. doi: 10.4324/9781003280637**

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For historians, the Meiji reforms were an event of the utmost importance in that they embodied the moment of Japan's transformation from feudalism to modernity, enabling Japan to confront the West as a global power in the early twentieth century. The reforms brought a different interpretation to a keen observer of the development of international law in a non-European space. Giorgio Fabio Colombo's meticulous research tracing the development of international law in imperial Japan in the late nineteenth century is a fresh contribution to the literature regarding the history of international law. Inspired by the María Luz incident in 1872, which altered Japan's role in global affairs, Colombo narrates his compelling account of Japan's ascendancy as a late bloomer to the international legal system. In the Japanese academic lexicon, international law was known as "*Bankokukouhou*", an expression the Japanese borrowed from the Chinese translation of Whaeton's "History of International Law", and in their journey to modernity the Japanese perceived international law as a mandatory tool with which to be admitted into the international legal system. Thus, international law has been integral to Japan's development.

Before tracing the trajectories that led to the María Luz incident. In Chapter 1, Colombo gives an apt description of Japan's yearning to adopt international law as the Japanese elite started to appreciate the power of legal weapons to accomplish their ends. Chapter 2 presents the María Luz case, whereby a ship sailing under the Peruvian flag entered Japanese territory and created a diplomatic dispute, which eventually elevated the independence of the Japanese judiciary, as this particular episode demonstrated their mastery of legal acumen before the Western powers. The case is still mentioned