

Orsman's *The polar captain's wife* to Ashleigh Young's *Small fry*. Given that limitation I thought she might have wanted to include something from *The rime of the ancient mariner* (surely the best known poem on Antarctica) and maybe a poem from Jean McNeill who has spent two summers with scientists in Antarctica.

Perhaps she has been unduly generous to New Zealand authors (which includes most of the poetry) but the book is published in New Zealand and needs to appeal to the local audience. But these are only the sort of comments that every anthology compiler must expect! And whilst proposing other authors and topics I would not want to suggest that this book will not achieve its primary aim – to highlight the contribution scientists have made and are making to understanding Antarctica

and explaining it to the public in simple and engaging accounts. This is a book for dipping into so surely, with our apparently reduced attention spans in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, an ideal volume for the younger generations?

The author includes a useful glossary to cover some of the technical terms in the extracts, and a well constructed index. The list of sources would have been more valuable if she had added details of the more recent editions of many of the books used. That way the reader would stand a reasonable chance of finding the book unlike the first editions of Captain Cook or Cherry-Garrard! Overall a welcome addition to the literature (David W.H. Walton, British Antarctic Survey, High Cross, Madingley Road, Cambridge CB3 0ET, UK ([dwhw@bas.ac.uk](mailto:dwhw@bas.ac.uk))).

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**The continent of international law. Explaining agreement design.** Barbara Koremenos. 2016. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. xviii + 437 p, softcover. ISBN 978-1-107-56144-1. \$29.99. doi:[10.1017/S0032247416000619](https://doi.org/10.1017/S0032247416000619)

Much has been written about the law(s) in Arctic in media and scientific sources. Oftentimes, especially media sources report about the lack of international regulation in the far north and the accompanying risk for armed conflict. In other words, Arctic states are considered to behave in an anarchic way which would only be controllable through the existence of a regulative body of law. The scientific community, on the other hand, has shown that Arctic cooperation is indeed based on *cooperative* elements, best exemplified by the Arctic Council, and that the Arctic and its resources as a cause for conflict is rather unlikely.

When taking these seemingly adversarial approaches into account, the present volume *The continent of international law* which is the outcome of the research project with the same title – abbreviated as COIL – at the Centre for Political Studies at the University of Michigan becomes very relevant. While as such not an Arctic or polar book, a review of this work appears necessary given the prominence of international law and international relations in Arctic discourse. The point of departure of COIL is therefore the behaviour of rationally acting states in an anarchic system that enact agreements as a means to tackle mutual problems (see also Guzman 2008). As the author notes on page 62, the book pulls together ‘insights from the international cooperation literature’ while the focus of this work lies on more than 200 sample agreements from the fields of environment, human rights, economics and security and a theory of monitoring, punishment, dispute resolution or withdrawal from these agreements. At the same time, game theory, contract theory and other political sciences tools are used. Koremenos as the Principle Investigator of COIL thus builds a bridge between international legal scholarship, political sciences and International Relations (IR), a link that only until rather recently has been oftentimes neglected, and remarks that ‘one cannot entertain a positive theory of international law without considering international politics, in particular, how power and self-interest matter for both the design and enforcement of international law’ (page 12).

With this in mind, Koremenos embarks on a journey to conduct a broad comparison within international law on the design of treaties, focusing on the treaties’ underlying cooperation problems and characteristics of the states engaged in the drafting and implementation of these treaties. Testable empirical data constitutes a crucial part of the discussion and makes the findings of the book go beyond the theoretical dimension of the study of international law. This being said, the state-centred focus of the book and indeed Koremenos’ claim that NGOs and the transnational society ‘are not the major force behind global order’ (page 28) does not stand without problems. This reviewer would argue that it depends on the subject area of cooperation. While, of course, states are those actors entering into specific agreements, especially in the field of the environment the agreements’ scope and application is indeed driven by non-state actors. One example would be the hunt for whales and the non-utilitarian approach now employed under the International Convention for the Regulation of Whaling (see Epstein 2005). Yet, this shall only be considered as a side note as regards the content of this book. This being said, the author nicely deals with the role of NGOs as (in)formal monitoring bodies of international agreements, therefore highlighting the normative role these organisations can play in the international system (page 279–292).

Koremenos has succeeded in analysing the design of international legal agreements to a degree that serves as a fundamental study for any further theoretical and empirical analysis regarding the legal speaker (the agreement itself) and the legal audience (the agreement’s subjects) in international law. At the same time, the approach taken in the book, especially as regards the implications of ‘uncertainty’ as regards agreement design, serve as a benchmark for analysis also of other legal environments. Especially relevant this reviewer would consider the focus on ‘uncertainty’ in the study of legal pluralism, both on an international level (Schiff Berman 2012) as well as on a regional and national level (see Larcom 2015).

It is thus the conjectures presented in this book, which then are empirically tested, which are of relevance particularly for Arctic legal research. They can be used to tackle numerous Arctic-relevant questions. One of these could be, for instance: what is the dependence between the uncertainty of behaviour of one or more Arctic Council member states and the degree of centralisation of a particular agreement? However, also Antarctic

law can be approached, for example, by using COIL's brief analysis of the 1979 Moon Treaty, which treats the resources of the Moon as a 'common heritage of mankind'. Antarctica is considered the same (see for instance Viikari 2012), begging the question of whether potential business ventures as regards resource exploitation in both 'common heritages' show parallels.

When taking the Arctic legal environment under closer scrutiny with the help of this outstanding book, a downside of the approach taken by COIL rises to the surface, however: its focus on state actors and treaty-based, 'hard' law, a focus COIL explicitly takes (see page 68). After all, as, for instance, shown by Hasanat (2013), Arctic law is to a large degree shaped by 'soft law' agreements. The Arctic Council as a key forum for Arctic cooperation furthermore goes beyond the nation states and includes the Arctic's indigenous peoples via the council's Permanent Participants. Notwithstanding, Koremenos' conjectures can nevertheless be tested also in a soft law context and are not *per se* confined to treaty-based law. If this fails, their further development is of course possible, underlining the book's importance for the analysis of Arctic law.

The book contains many elements which in one way or the other can be used for the analysis of international law pertaining to both polar regions. A brief review like the present does certainly not allow to go much in depth. Suffice it to say that this reviewer in his research will from now on make

frequent use of this book and the normative findings of the COIL project. As a consequence, *The continent of international law* should indeed be an inherent part of the analysis of polar legal design, contributing to the understanding of polar legal dynamics and actor behaviour (Nikolas Sellheim, Scott Polar Research Institute, University of Cambridge, Lensfield Road, Cambridge CB2 1ER, UK (nps31@cam.ac.uk)).

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**South to Franz Josef Land!** Valerian Albanov. 2016. Introduction Sergey O. Frank, foreword Nikita Bolotnikov, translated and edited William Barr. Moscow: Paulsen. 272p, hardcover, illustrated. ISBN 978-5-98797-141-3. 30US\$.

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All polar historians sit up and take notice when they are confronted by a volume with which Professor William Barr is associated, if not as author then as translator and editor. There will be few, if any, who can claim that they have acquired no new knowledge from one of his volumes and this reviewer freely admits that he approaches Barr's books with a mixture of pleasurable anticipation and trepidation, knowing that a fascinating tale will certainly be told but at the same time fearful that his own ignorance will be chastised yet again. And among all of Barr's voluminous output, this particular book is a real gem, worthy of the attention of all with interests in our area of concern.

The expedition of which this volume sets out to chronicle a part, was private and was initiated by Georgiy L'vovich Brusilov, an officer in the Russian navy. Luckily for him, his family was wealthy and the venture was generously funded by his uncle. The aim was to navigate the northern sea route from west to east. Valerian Albanov, born in Voronezh in 1881 and educated at the St. Petersburg Navigation College, was the navigator on board the expedition's vessel, *Sv. Anna*. It departed from St. Petersburg on 28 July 1912, rather late in the year, and having sailed round the Kola peninsula, reached Yugoskiy Shar on 2 September continuing into the Kara Sea and encountering very heavy ice. The vessel wintered in the ice in 1912–1913 and 1913–1914 by the end of which *Sv. Anna* had begun to drift west to the north of Franz Josef Land.

However matters on board were not harmonious and relations between Brusilov and Albanov had deteriorated to the point at which the latter sought and obtained permission to build a kayak and to leave the ship in spring 1914 with such of the crew as wished to accompany him. In the event he departed from the vessel on 10 April with 14 men plus kayaks and sledges. The party remaining on board was never heard of again and no relics of the ship have ever been found. The views of Albanov's party were far from coherent, however, and after 10 days, three men elected to return to the ship while one man chose to attempt to find his own route. Surely a gesture of desperation! None of these were ever seen again. The overall route of the party was south, hence the title of Albanov's book. After much suffering, the men remaining with Albanov arrived near Mys Garmsuort on Zemlya Aleksandry aiming to head for the famous Mys Flora where Albanov hoped to find provisions left behind by other expeditions. Due to a shortage of kayaks some of the party were forced to attempt this part of the journey on ski over fast ice. They, also, were never seen again and, after other losses, only Albanov himself and a sailor, Aleksandr Konrad, reached reasonable safety at Mys Flora on 9 July. Here their luck turned and they were incredibly fortunate. Preparing for yet another winter in the Arctic they were met by *Sv. Foca* the vessel of an expedition under Georgiy Yakovlevich Sedov that transported them back to Russia.

This book is Albanov's own narrative, originally published in 1917, of what was a disastrous expedition and one which contained familiar ingredients of such; suffering, courage, personal disputes and endless close encounters with death with an eventual, yet muted, triumph at the end. And of course one might expect that the account would be rather one sided and appreciate that this is incapable of being checked.

What sort of man was Albanov? How far can we judge him on the strength of his own writings? One quotation is indicative