

CALL FOR PAPERS

International Law's Objects: Emergence, Encounter and Erasure through Object and Image

Dr. Jessie Hohmann and Dr. Daniel Joyce, the editors, invite proposals for contributions to an edited book on *International Law's Objects: Emergence, Encounter and Erasure through Object and Image*.

AIMS AND SCOPE OF THE PROJECT

The study of international law is highly text based. Whether as practice, scholarship or pedagogy, the discipline of international law both relies on and produces a wealth of written material. Cases, treaties, and volumes of academic writing are the legal sources through which most of us working in international law relate to the subject, and, at times we might come to feel that these texts are our major project and output.

Yet international law has a rich existence in the world. International law is often developed, conveyed and authorised through objects or images. From the symbolic (the regalia of the head of state and the symbols of sovereignty), to the mundane (a can of dolphin-safe tuna certified as complying with international trade standards), international legal authority can be found in the objects around us. Similarly, the practice of international law often relies on material objects or images, both as evidence (satellite images, bones of the victims of mass atrocities) and to found authority (for instance, maps and charts).

Motivating this project are three questions:

- First, what might studying international law through objects reveal? What might objects, rather than texts, tell us about sources, recognition of states, construction of territory, law of the sea, or international human rights law?
- Second, what might this scholarly undertaking reveal about the objects – as *aims* or *projects* – of international law? How do objects reveal, or perhaps mask, these aims, and what does this tell us about the reasons some (physical or material) objects are foregrounded, and others hidden or ignored?
- Third, which objects will be selected? We anticipate a no doubt eclectic but illuminating collection, which points to objects made central, but also objects disclaimed, by international law. Moreover, the project will result in a fascinating artefact (itself an object) of the preoccupations of the profession at this moment in time.

There are various ways one might begin to think about international law through objects. These categories are offered provisionally, and are in no sense intended to constrain the imagination of contributors:

- The first is those *objects which are used routinely in the study and practice of international law*. These include treaties and diplomatic cables for instance. These are normally rendered in text but represent important objects of interest in their own right. An extension of this category, also routinely used in international law scholarship and practice, are maps.
- A second category might be those *ritual objects that seek to convey the power and authority of international law* through their symbolic weight. Such objects might include, for example, the flag planted by Captain Cook to claim the territory now known as Australia, the gavel used in the Nuremberg trials, or the Hague Peace Palace itself.
- A third category of objects are those that convey *the way international law operates over individuals*. For example, consumer goods marked to demonstrate compliance with international standards illustrate complex issues of trade regulation and our experience of it, while a relocation village built to accommodate 'project affected peoples' illuminates another aspect of global development. Meanwhile, a landmine is a way of interrogating international humanitarian law, a skull from a mass grave a way of considering the international crime of genocide. An image of the border fence between the US and Mexico might illustrate contemporary manifestations of territory.
- A fourth category could investigate those *objects 'written out' of international law*. For example, these objects might include the regalia of sovereignty of peoples denied that sovereignty by international law, such as the two-row Wampum belts of native communities in North America. This category is perhaps the most difficult to predict by an international lawyer trained to see objects inside the borders of our understandings of the law, and it is expected that those contributing will bring to light objects not anticipated by the editors themselves.

In each instance, the object or image invites us to consider international law from a different angle. In each, it brings to light not only the object itself, which in many instances will be fascinating in its own right, but what that object 'says' about international law and its processes, history, and development. In addition, the object tells us something about the author and his or her approach to international law.

The result will be an edited volume composed of images of 'international law's objects', with accompanying text explaining and illuminating the relevance and importance of the object to the development, impact, status or authority of international law.

The forty best contributions will be selected for publication in the edited volume, and other excellent contributions will also be considered for inclusion in a digital archive to accompany the volume.

Accordingly, we invite you to select one image or object, which in your view best represents your area of expertise within international law, or international law as a whole, and to write about its significance in international law. We also invite scholars from other disciplines to bring their perspectives to bear on international law's objects.

Contributions should be short – 3000 to 4000 words – and will be set alongside photographs of the selected image or object. The contributions should be written for a non-specialist audience so the volume can be enjoyed across disciplines, and as a teaching tool for students at all levels. Contributions should be lightly footnoted. We anticipate contributors will be able to speak meaningfully about their objects without being unduly technical.

TIMELINE AND SPECIFICS

Proposals for chapters should be kept to a maximum of 700 words, keeping in mind the final contributions are to be no more than 4000 words.

Proposals should be submitted, by email, to objectsofil@gmail.com

The call for papers closes Friday April 18th 2015.

Successful authors will be notified by end of July 2015.

We would expect full draft contributions to be ready for circulation to contributors by December 2015, for discussion at a workshop hosted at Queen Mary, University of London, in April 2016 (with a workshop date to be confirmed shortly).

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