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As is well known, international law provides for the peaceful settlement of international disputes as stipulated in Articles 2(3) and 33 of the United Nations Charter. The principle of peaceful settlement can translate into various means of resolution (*e.g.* negotiation, enquiry, mediation, conciliation, etc.). The last step of this array of possibilities is litigation (*i.e.* arbitration and adjudication). Nevertheless, the road to litigation is long, and it is strewn with pitfalls for states when they are familiar with the cost and the length of proceedings and the other constraints that they will have to face. Thus, why would states decide to settle their disputes through litigation? This collection of contributions, edited by Natalie Klein, attempts to answer this question, which remains of major concern for international lawyers.

Before any further development, it is important to draw attention to the genesis of this book. As explained in the editor’s preface, this book is the continuation of a previous, similar project carried out in Australia.¹ This former research aimed at expounding on why Australia has resorted so many times to adjudication. Throughout this study, a growing interrogation arose: “Why do states litigate?”²

To answer this complex question, the twenty-one contributors divided their works into three parts. The first part examines the place of international litigation in the world and compares it to its national counterpart and political methods. The second and third parts expose the discreet approach of international litigation depending, respectively, on a particular region of the world

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2 *Ibid.*, XIV.
and on the different areas of international law, such as international humanitarian law, law of the sea, etc.

*Litigating International Law Disputes* is a highly structured compilation of works where each contribution takes its own place in, and brings its own added value, to the collective endeavor. Thus, the first contribution (“The place of international litigation in international law” by John Merrills) and the final contribution (“Litigating international law disputes: where to?” by Cesare P. R. Romano) act, in turn, as an introduction and a conclusion to the book. Such a presentation is to be commended as it allows the reader to choose to read the publication in its entirety or to pick up and read one or more of the individual contributions. This is amplified by the fact that inside the book most of the chapters cross-refer to the others, thus avoiding useless repetition.

With regard to the substance, the publication deals with various realms of international law. Yet, it should be noted that each area of law (international humanitarian law, law of the sea, use of force, etc.) is studied with precision and is exceptionally well documented. Even if some excerpts are quite specialized, reading them should not surpass a neophyte’s comprehension. All the authors reach a fine balance between technicality and clarity. The contribution of Dr. Saiful Karim concerning the UNCLOS dispute settlement system is an example of this. Whereas the UNCLOS system may seem quite difficult to put forward in approximately twenty pages, Dr. Saiful Karim faces the challenge, explaining how this system functions and clarifying the factors that will influence states to turn to it. Conversely, it could be feared that certain contributions call for an excessive degree of generality. However, Christine Gray’s research concerning the use of force – to take only one example – achieves a fine analysis of the litigation concerning the use of force by comparing the numerous cases already brought before an international court or tribunal. The result is striking owing to the great deal of common features that appear amongst these cases.