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An eternal promise ? : three sketches on the universality of international humanitarian law / Tamás Hoffmann

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Abstract:	Since time immemorial, humankind has sought to create a regulatory framework that could mitigate the destruction of war. Many international lawyers emphasize that the very character of the law of armed conflict (LOAC) has undergone a profound transformation as signaled by the increasingly prevalent use of the expression "international humanitarian law" (IHL), a term that in itself implies universality and equal application to tame the horrors of armed conflict. Such "humanized" humanitarian law seems to be the pinnacle of progress, the fulfilment of the ancient dream of humanity. Still, this pristine image is marred by a history of racism, exclusion and lethal inclusion. In this chapter the author reflects on these blemishes and examines whether international humanitarian law can move beyond its past and present to finally truly deserve such lofty label.
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