## **Contents**

Foreword XV
Preface XVIII
Acknowledgements and a Note on Archival Research XXI
A Brief Note about Nomenclature – "The Gulf" XXV
List of Figures XXXII

#### Introduction 1

The Islands – "A Pile of Rock"? 5
Lesser Tunb 6
Greater Tunb 7
Abu Musa 11
Fundamental Legal Questions 15

#### 1 Origins and Nature of the Dispute 19

Status and Extent of Independence of the Qawásim Rulers in Lengeh 38 Relevance of the Qawásim Reign in Lengeh to the Disputed Islands 51

### 2 The Gulf Islands Dispute in Historical Perspective 70

The Islands in Antiquity 72
The Islands during the Sixteenth through the Eighteenth
Centuries 78

Evidence of Possession or Ownership of the Islands 85 Claims of Ownership of the Islands 86 Use of the Islands 87

Control of the Persian Littoral and the Gulf Waters 87
Reliance on Historical Assumptions and Conjecture – from Antiquity to the Eighteenth Century 88
The Emergence of "Critical Dates" in the Nineteenth and

Twentieth Centuries 93

The Events of the Nineteenth Century Prior to 1887 96

The Tunbs 97

Abu Musa 99

The Events of 1887 101

The Persian Position 108
The Qawásim/British Position 110

The Events of 1904 115
The Events of (and Preceding) 1971 123
UAE Protests since 1971 144
Iran's Reply 147

## 3 Modes of Acquisition and Effective Control of Territory 150

General Rules under International Law 150

Accretion 153

Cession 153

Occupation 154

Subjugation or Conquest 159

Acquisitive Prescription 161

Historical Consolidation of Title 166

Geographical Considerations and the Doctrine of Contiguity 170

Establishing Effective Control over Territory 172

The Concept of Effectivités 173

The Relationship between Effectivités and Title to Territory 176

Subsequent Conduct 177

Other Relevant Concepts 178

Recognition, Acquiescence and Estoppel 178

The Critical Date 182

Intertemporal Law 186

Uti Possidetis Juris and Its Relation to the Right of

Self-determination 188

# 4 The Pre-Sixteenth Century Period and the Existence of Historic Rights of Ownership 191

Iranian Claims of Historic Rights of Ownership 191

Challenges in Establishing the Iranian Claims 199

Ancient or Historic Title over Territory under International Law 203

Continuous Display of Authority 203

Insufficiency of Presumptive Evidence 212

Admissibility of Evidence and Unsubstantiated Assertions 221

Nature of Sovereign Functions 223

Loss of Ancient Title/Failure to Maintain Title 224

Consequence of Loss of Ancient Title 228

Analysis of Iran's Claim of Ancient or Historic Title 229

Initial Observations 232

Absence of Direct Evidence 234

Inference, Indirect Evidence, Conjecture and Speculation 23

Conclusions 260

5 The Kingdom of Hormuz, Its Conquest by Portugal in 1515 and Portugal's Defeat at the Hands of Persia and Britain in 1622 265

Were the Three Islands Territories of the Kingdom of Hormuz? 268 In Conquering Hormuz, did Portugal Acquire Sovereignty over the Islands? 283

The Kingdom of Hormuz as a Persian "Vassal" 284
Status of Hormuz's Territorial Possessions after Its
Conquest by Portugal 293
Persian "Cession" of Hormuz to Portugal 297
Portuguese "Occupation" of the Islands 299

Did Portugal Subsequently Cede the Islands to Persia? 299 Did Persia Acquire Possession of the Islands through Conquest in 1622? 302

Were the Kingdom of Hormuz or Portugal Sovereign over the Islands by Virtue of Geographical Considerations? 305 Conclusions 315

6 The Early Seventeenth Century to the End of the Eighteenth Century: Were the Islands Still *Terra Nullius*? 317

Recorded Sightings and Visits to the Islands 319 Lack of Persian Sea Power 325

Theories Underlying Persian Claims of Sovereignty 332

Asserted Incorporation of the Islands into the Province of
Fars and the Raising of Taxes from the Islands 336

"Contiguity" or Other Geographical Considerations 345

Persian Acquisition of Title through Acts of the Qawásim 351

Conclusions 365

7 The Seeds of Conflict: 1800 until 1887 – Effective Occupation 367
Raising of the Persian Flag at the Island of Sirri in 1887 367
Theoretical Framework for Asserting Acquisition of Title by
Occupation 373

Grounds for a Persian Claim of Occupation from 1800–1887 374

Absence of Evidence of a Direct Persian Occupation 380

Persian Occupation through the Lengeh Qawásim 380

Persian "Ratification" of an Effective Occupation Carried out by the Lengeh-Qawásim 394

Grounds for a Qawásim Claim of Occupation from 1800–1887 395 Applicable Legal Doctrines 395

Effective Occupation 395
Special Conditions of the Region 396

Evidentiary Framework – Abu Musa 399

Claims of Ownership and Disputes over Use and Access 399

Building Infrastructure 403

Investigating Crime 404

Exiling of the Ex-Ruler 404

Recognition of Qawásim Title 405

The Hennell Line and Other Considerations 406

Legal Analysis - Abu Musa 408

Intention and Will to Act as Sovereign 410

Display of Sovereign Authority 414

Private Acts Carried out with the Authority of the Ruler 416

Activities or Functions of the State 418

Division of Ownership of Islands between Sharjah and

Ras Al Khaimah 422

Conclusions - Abu Musa 425

Evidentiary Framework - The Tunbs 425

Claims of Ownership and Disputes over Use and Access 427

Key Documentary Evidence 432

Legal Analysis - The Tunbs 438

Intention and Will to Act as Sovereign 438

Display of Sovereign Authority 442

Independent Ownership of Greater Tunb by the Qawasim

Rulers of Lengeh 445

No Basis for Finding Effective Occupation of Greater Tunb by

Rulers of Lengeh 448

Did Qawásim Rulers of Lengeh Hold Partial Ownership of

Greater Tunb? 449

Conclusions - Greater Tunb 451

The Lesser Tunb 455

Geographical Considerations 457

Conclusions - Lesser Tunb 459

8 The Period 1887–1971: The Possible "Critical Dates" in the Sovereignty Dispute 462

The Principle of the "Critical Date" 463

Protest and Acquiescence 465

Relevant Events Leading to the Possible Critical Dates 469

The Events of 1887/8: Factual Background 471

The Events of 1887/8: Is This the Critical Date of the Dispute?

Abu Musa 479

The Tunbs 482

The "Flag Incident" of 1903/4: Factual Background 490 The "Flag Incident" of 1903/4: Is This the Critical Date of the Dispute? 502

Events Following the Critical Dates 509

The Wönckhaus Affair (1906–1914) 510

Requested Mining Concession on the Lesser Tunb (1908) 518

Construction of a Lighthouse on Greater Tunb (1913) 521

Red Oxide Concession on Abu Musa Granted by the Ruler of Sharjah (1922) 525

Visit of Persian Customs Launch to Abu Musa (1925) and the Detention of an Arab Dhow Approaching Greater Tunb by Iranian Customs (1928) 527

The 1928 "Status Quo Agreement" and the Anglo-Iranian Treaty Negotiations (1929–1935) 529

Various Visits by Iranian Authorities to Greater Tunb (1933, 1934 and 1935) 533

Red-Oxide Concession over Abu Musa (1934/5) 536 Withdrawal of the Flag of Ras Al Khaimah at Greater Tunb by Order of the Ruler (1934/5) 539

Iranian Concession for Mineral Exploration in the Area Around the Islands (1939) 542

Visits of HMs Nearchus to Greater Tunb (1942) 544 Increasing Assertiveness by Iran (Post-Second

World War) 545

Iranian Intention to Establish Administrative Offices on the Islands (1948) 546

Planting of Iranian Flag on Lesser Tunb (1949) 547 Visit of Iranian Naval Vessel to Abu Musa (1951) 547 Tripartite Discussions (1954–55) 548 Unconfirmed Reports of Iranian Encroachment on the Islands (1956) 551

Iranian Military Incursions (1961–71) 552

Conclusions 553

9 The MOU Related to Abu Musa, the Seizure of the Tunbs by Iran on 30 November 1971 and Subsequent Events up to the Present 555 Relevant Historical Developments 556

British Withdrawal from the Gulf 556
Negotiations Leading to the MOU and the Seizure of the
Tunbs 572
UAE Protests 606

General Responses of the Islamic Republic of Iran 621 Attempts at Bilateral Negotiations 624

Legal Analysis – The Seizure of the Tunbs by Iran 625

No Recognition or Acquiescence by Third States Generally 628

No Acquiescence by Ras Al Khaimah or the UAE 630

Conclusions on the Tunbs 633

Legal Analysis – Abu Musa, Its Rightful Sovereign and the Legal Status and Effects of the MOU 634
Sovereign Ownership of Abu Musa Post-MOU 635
Legal Status of the MOU under International Law 636

- (a) Initial Considerations The Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties 636
- (b) Was Sharjah a State or Did It Otherwise Possess Treaty-Making Capacity in November 1971? 639
- (c) Sharjah's Status as a State Prior to the 1892 Exclusive Agreement 641
- (d) Sharjah's Status Following the Conclusion of the Exclusive Agreement 642
- (e) The Impact of the Exclusive Agreement on Sharjah's Treaty-Making Capacity 652
- (f) Did the Parties Intend to Create Legal Relations? 656
- (g) Conclusion 665

Succession of the UAE to the International Treaties of Sharjah  $\,\,$  665

jah 665
The Case of "Protectorates" 667
Newly Independent States 669

Application of the Principles of State Succession to the MOU 672 Conclusions on the MOU's Binding Nature and UAE

Succession 678

Is the MOU Null and Void Ab Initio for Having Been Procured by the Threat of Force? 678

Background and Overview 678

Article 51 or 52? 686

Illegality of the Threat to Use Force 689

Evidence of Iranian Coercion and Threats to Use Force 689

Causal Link between the Threats of Force and the Conclusion of the Mou 691

Existence of Quid Pro Quo Benefits 696

Loss of the Right to Invoke Invalidity 700

Interpretative Analysis of the MOU, Asserted Breach and Consequences 708

- Scope and Meaning of the Rights and Obligations Arising out of the MOU
- The Iranian "Proviso" and Its Legal Effect 725 (b)
- (c) Conduct of Iran on Abu Musa
- (d) Acquisitive Prescription 732
- (e) Nature of the Territorial Regime Established by the MOU Unilateral Termination of the MOU in the Absence of Breach Breach of the MOU by Iran and Its Consequences

Loss of Right to Terminate or Suspend 744 Procedural Requirements 745

Potential Role of the United Nations

The Security Council 748 The General Assembly 751

#### Evidentiary Value of Maps in Sovereignty Disputes over 10 Territory 759

Evidentiary Value of Maps under International Law 762 International Case Law 766

Seventeenth and Eighteenth Century Maps Produced by the Dutch East India Company - An Early Window on the Islands 788 Maps Relied on by Iran and Scholars Supporting Iran's Claims of Sovereignty 794

Maps of the Eighteenth Century 796 Maps of the Nineteenth Century 802 Maps of the Twentieth Century 840

Assessment of the Evidentiary Value of the Maps Presented by Iran and Its Supporters 847

### Bibliography 861

Books and Chapters in Books 861 Articles 869 Other Sources 872 Cases 873 Treaties 875 National Archives 875

Index 878