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Book review

Robin Churchill, Vaughn Lowe, and Amy Sander, *The law of the sea*, Fourth edition (Manchester, Manchester University Press) 2022, ISBN: 9780719079689, softbound, £60, 897+lxix pp.

This book will require no introduction to many people reading this journal. For many years, 'Churchill and Lowe' was the principal textbook on the law of the sea, at least in the United Kingdom and many other English-speaking parts of the world. The first edition was published shortly after the conclusion of the Law of the Sea (LOS) Convention, providing, in the words of the authors at the time, 'an introductory survey not only of the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, but also of the customary and conventional law which supplements it.'¹ It was widely admired not only for its clear articulation of the new set of rules laid down by the LOS Convention, but also for situating those rules in their broader historical context and for highlighting the challenges of interpreting and applying the Convention given continuing differences of opinion and practice.

Further editions followed in 1988 and 1999, with the latter edition appearing shortly after the entry into force of the LOS Convention. However, by the early 2000s, the text was already beginning to become dated, in large part due to the increasing practice generated by the entry into force of the Convention and the operation of the institutions established thereunder, not least the jurisprudence generated by the dispute settlement bodies constituted under Part XV of the Convention. At the same time, competition emerged, in the form of several new English language textbooks on the law of the sea, each of which offered their own style and approach to the subject. Yet, there remained an affection for 'Churchill and Lowe' and so the publication of a fourth edition, where the original authors have been joined by Amy Sander, will be widely welcomed. So how has the book evolved in its latest iteration?

The first noticeable difference is the size of the fourth edition. Whilst the third edition was 462 pages (excluding prefatory material, index and annexes), the new edition is a whopping 878 pages. In part, this is simply a reflection of the breadth of material that has emerged in this field of international law. Nevertheless, it does mean that the book is significantly longer than its main competitors, which may make a difference to those students wanting a more concise introduction to the subject. Yet, it is for precisely the depth and richness of analysis that many readers will turn to this book.

The overall structure of the book remains largely the same. The book begins with a historical background, followed by chapters on baselines and the main maritime zones and regimes (internal waters, territorial sea, straits, archipelagic waters, contiguous zone, continental shelf, exclusive economic zone, high seas and international seabed area) as well as a chapter on maritime delimitation, which not only incorporates the extensive jurisprudence on this topic since the last edition, but also new and emerging issues such as grey areas and the effect of sea level rise on maritime boundary agreements. There then follows a series of thematic chapters

¹ RR Churchill and AV Lowe, *The Law of the Sea* (Manchester University Press 1983) ix.

dealing with safety of navigation, fisheries, the protection of the marine environment, marine scientific research, the transfer of marine technology, landlocked states, dispute settlement. A major change in this respect is the significant expansion of material relating to the protection of the marine environment. From one chapter in the third edition, this issue now spans three chapters covering 177 pages. This reflects the growing importance of this topic both in law but also in the immense ecological challenges that face the international community at the present time.

All in all, there is little doubt that the fourth edition of the Law of the Sea should become a well-used addition to many book shelves, providing, as it does, a broad but reasonably concise analysis of many central issues in the law of the sea. It will be useful both for an advanced student of the subject, as well as those readers wanting a solid starting point for more detailed research into the law of the sea.

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