

imperial ideologies that were otherwise typical of Western representatives. Casement, known for his reports on exploitation of labour in the Congo, exposed the British-owned plantations as sites of extreme and gratuitous violence. Sub-Saharan Africa is less well covered, although de Goey notes the existence of consular-like representatives between African peoples before the influx of imperial powers. He dates the development of the European sensibility of superiority, evidenced through consular rituals and the shaping of treaties, from the late eighteenth century—a pattern that was also seen in the Middle East as Western representatives increasingly demanded recognition on their terms rather than the terms of the host culture. Here, too, the author notes the competitive nature of consular representation, as agents reported not only on the economic and political conditions of the local scene, but also on the local activity of other competing nations.

The conclusion reprises much of the content of the introduction and the sweep of the geographical surveys, reiterating the trends that marked the development of consular activity throughout the long nineteenth century. The work is a nimble and engaging synthesis of largely secondary sources that provides a handy comparative reference (although mention of colonies and countries in Oceania is overlooked) to this important field. Sadly, the production values of the book do not do justice to the intriguing information that de Goey offers—no images or maps and just a few tables accompany the text, encompassed within a bland grey cover that somehow inflects the lowly historical status of consuls. Although a valuable addition to the literature on economic and political institutions that shaped the modern world, *Consuls* could go further in uncovering the specific ways that consular services contributed to the spread of both capitalism and institutions during the time of formal and informal imperialism. De Goey is right to conclude that further research is needed, including more studies that complement the Western focus of this book.

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Deborah Breen, *Boston University*

Gareth Williams, Peter Pentz and Matthias Wemhoff, eds., *The Vikings: Life and Legend* Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 2014. 288 pp. ISBN: 9780801479427. \$35.00.

The opportunity to begin a review of a history book with the phrase “this is a gorgeous work” happens far too rarely. *The Vikings: Life and Legend* is “gorgeous” on variety of levels: the quality of the scholarship, the soundness of its organization and the wealth of its images each demonstrate incredible quality. This should not be a surprise to the reader given the fact that three separate museums (i.e., the National Museum of Denmark, The British Museum and the Museum für Vorund Frühgeschichte, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin) collaborated to create this book. A rich and engaging work that offers insights about the worlds of the Viking Age, for both scholars and general readers, *Vikings* is a joy and a surprise to read.

Produced in conjunction with an exhibit (of the same name) by the three above-mentioned museums, the stated goal of the Vikings is to explore two core themes of the Viking Age. The first is that, “[T]he events and developments of the Viking Age, cannot be understood purely in the context of Scandinavia, or even of northern Europe” (16). The Viking Age, defined by the editors as beginning roughly in the late eight century and lasting until about the middle of the eleventh century, was an ocean-going period. The corresponding reach of the Vikings during this period was vast and resulted first in contact and then in profound cultural interactions that

caused significant change within the Viking world as well as within those cultures that came in contact with the Vikings (16-17). Tracing out those changes is a major goal of this text. The second theme of this book revolves around Roskilde 6, the centrepiece of the corresponding exhibit and the largest Viking ship ever found (16). Roskilde 6 was a royal ship, built around 1025 to reflect the power and reach of King Cnut's realm (16-17). King Cnut reflects the endpoint of the Viking Age, both in time and in nature. He was a Christian and ruler of Denmark who brought part of England, Norway and, perhaps, Sweden under his rule to create "the largest Viking kingdom, which spanned the North Sea in a way that has never been paralleled before or since" (17). Since the longboat formed the core of the Viking world, Roskilde 6 represents the core of a new understandings and interpretations of that world.

Like much recent scholarship, this work takes a nuanced look at the Viking Age.<sup>1</sup> Its approach is beautifully and superbly brought to fruition: almost every page is adorned with high resolution photographs of material culture from the Viking world and draws on a wealth of archaeological holdings from England, Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Russia and beyond. The focus of the chapter "Power & Aristocracy" is the evolution of the Viking Age systems of governance. It analyses the character of the early forms of local Viking raider organisation, as well as the sophistication of later phases of Viking rule that evolved into a more national-style governance by the end of the Viking Age. This evolution is illustrated by the analysis of coinage, such as early Viking bullion sticks that became increasingly sophisticated and standardized coins that utilised pictures of kings and other cultural symbols. The text describes these changes but, more concretely, demonstrates them with page after page of photographs of Viking Age coins.<sup>2</sup> As the book analyses its examples, it offers archaeological evidence to illustrate its claims. Every chapter in *The Vikings* is by a different author and each draws on their area of expertise to support a diversity of approaches that reflect the diversity of the Viking Age.

In addition to a wealth of images, the text's organisation reflects a nuanced view of the global nature of the Viking Age. Recent scholarship in world history seeks to reorient the narratives of world history around global phenomena, common and/or shared experiences that exist beyond the nation state and that are shared human experiences.<sup>3</sup> The *Vikings* embodies this scholarship in the organisation of its analysis by eschewing chronology or geography in favour of chapters built on global phenomena. The book has into four chapters: "Contacts & Exchange", "Warfare & Military Expansion", "Power & Aristocracy" (discussed above) and "Belief & Ritual". It concludes with a chapter titled "Ships & The Vikings". The first chapter deals with Viking seamanship and describes the skill and technologies that allowed the Vikings to create a trading and social network that touched much of the Western world. The second chapter details the manner in which the Vikings used violence as a part of that network, and noted that, while recent scholarship replaces the "exclusively violent picture of the Vikings" with one that includes a peaceful trading image, "It is important not to forget that it was the warlike aspects of Scandinavian society ... that gave us the concept of the 'Vikings' and the 'Viking Age'" (79). Here, the work tracks the weapons—spears, axes, swords, shields and

<sup>1</sup> Richard Hall, *The World of the Vikings* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2013); F.D. Logan, *The Vikings in History*, 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition (London: Routledge, 2005).

<sup>2</sup> One interesting element that these coins reflect is the dramatic reach of the Viking Age. Many of the latter Viking Age coins have Islamic symbols on them, illustrating the social and symbolic importance of Islamic society on the Viking world (See, e.g., 55).

<sup>3</sup> Patrick Manning, *Navigating World History: Historians Create a Global Past* (Basingstoke, U.K.: Palgrave-Macmillan, 2003).

the like—and the ships that formed the basis for the military success of Viking adventures. The chapter ends by describing the transition from the raiding nature of early Viking military efforts to the later Viking Age conquests and settlements.

The chapter “Belief & Ritual” reviews the early pagan beliefs of the Vikings and their evolution and replacement as the Viking society came into contact with the Christian cultures. The early part of this chapter reveals a very nuanced and sophisticated belief system that formed the foundation of the pagan religion of the early Viking Age and is particularly fascinating. Adding to the book’s thematic approach, each chapter contains two to three short “mini-essays” that develop the claims and ideas of the larger chapters by examining narrower topics. Thus, in the chapter “Belief & Ritual”, there are mini-essays on “The Fyrkat Woman”, “Ritual Sites at Lake Tissø”, and “The Ossberg ship and Ritual Burial”. Each of these fascinating shorter essays adds substantial weight to the larger chapters by using focused analysis and a narrower critical engagement. In the final chapter, “Ships & The Vikings”, the text returns to that most emblematic feature of the Viking Age: the longboat. The authors use this final chapter to return to the core themes of the work and trace out, in the variety of longboats (from small coastal ships to Roskilde 6 and from warships to trading vessels), the complex and varied nature of the Viking Age itself.

As with any work, there are elements that might have been improved. The wealth of images is outstanding and in a museum exhibit, perhaps, easily digestible as one walks through a physical space. However, in book form, the wealth of images can get “noisy” and distract readers from the flow of the textual narrative, especially since the text does not uniformly link its analysis to the corresponding images. An academic reader might also be disappointed in the limited nature of the footnotes, which often merely refer the reader to associated scholarly works. Finally, the lack of explicit separation of what is new evidence from what is not leaves the reader wondering which items are the recent archaeological evidence that the editors mention in their Introduction and thus form the basis for their “new” interpretations of the Viking Age. These are, of course, minor notes in a symphony of a book that is rich, beautiful and well constructed.

In the Forward, Queen Margrethe of Denmark writes that, “The many new finds have given us further knowledge about the people of Viking Age, their thoughts and deeds,” and that is most certainly an accurate description of this book (7). Williams, Pentz and Wemhoff (as well as their museum staffs and other authors in text) are to be congratulated for putting together such a gorgeous and substantive work about the age of the Vikings. I am already imagining ways to use it in my World and Western history survey courses.

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Thomas J. Rushford, *Northern Virginia Community College*

## NORTH AMERICA

Nathaniel Millett. *The Maroons of Prospect Bluff and Their Quest for Freedom in the Atlantic World*. Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida, 2013. 360 pp. ISBN: 9780813060866. \$29.95.

In 1819, an anonymous veteran of the First Seminole War described Florida’s 1810s physical and geopolitical landscapes as peculiar. “Its vicinity to the four southern tribes of Indians, and