

Book Reviews

Authors: Cooper, Andrew, Finkl, Charlie, Charlier, Roger H., and Axelrod, Constance C.

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BOOK REVIEWS



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Archaeology and the Sea in Scandinavia and Britain.

By Ole Crumlin-Pedersen. Viking Ship Museum. Distributed by Oxbow Books, Oxford, 184 p. £45. ISBN: 978-87-85180-05-6.

More than 10 years ago when, together with Brian Williams, I was establishing the Centre for Maritime Archaeology in Northern Ireland, we looked for examples of successful operations elsewhere. That search took us inevitably to Roskilde in Denmark, which we visited in 1999. There, a similar centre had been established at the Viking Ship Museum in 1993 (it continued in existence until 2003). Under the directorship of Ole Crumlin-Pedersen, the Roskilde Centre achieved worldwide acclaim for its work in maritime archaeology and its combination of maritime archaeological fieldwork, experimental archaeology in reconstructing (using ancient methods) and sailing ancient vessels, and interpreting the maritime history of Scandinavia, particularly during the Viking Age. At a breakfast meeting in the freezing midwinter, we were treated to a presentation by Ole Crumlin-Pedersen of the work that had been done at Roskilde. Each section concluded with a hefty monograph being set on the table, and by the end of the talk this pile of monographs was at least 2 feet high. The book “Archaeology and the Sea in Scandinavia and Britain” is a collection of six lectures given by Crumlin-Pedersen to the Royal Society of Antiquaries in Scotland, and it condenses the work in those (and subsequent) monographs into less than 200 pages. Subtitled “a personal account,” the book describes much of the pioneering work in which Crumlin-Pedersen played the leading role over the past 40 years.

The book is divided into six chapters, each of which can be read as a stand-alone section, and the clear theme throughout is man’s relationship with the coast and sea. The first chapter demonstrates how the study of maritime archaeology involves a thoroughly multidisciplinary set of approaches, including geomorphology, ethnography, and excavation underwater, in wetlands, and on the coast. The maritime archaeology approach is illustrated by examples from Crumlin-Pedersen’s own experience. As a coastal geomorphologist, I was particularly intrigued by the description of the influence on ship types exerted by the geological and oceanographic setting in which they evolved. The book shows how stark differences between the sheltered Baltic waters, exposed North Atlantic, and stormy North Sea combined with differences in landing places and trade routes to influence boat design in each region. The chapter also draws together the diverse strands of maritime archaeological investigation. For example, prehistoric vessels were reconstructed using materials and tools

available to their original makers and were then subject to sailing trials. This not only provided insights into the ancient ways of life and the likely ranges of the boats, it also revealed a remarkable similarity to Bronze Age rock carvings of boats underway as viewed from the shore.

Chapters 2, 3, and 4 deal largely with ship and boat design and its evolution and spatial variability and follow a loosely chronological structure. Much of this interest in boats derives from Crumlin-Pedersen’s training in naval architecture and his involvement in the excavation of five ships in Roskilde Fjord that had been deliberately scuttled to protect the town from naval attack. The diverse origins and specialised design of those Viking Age ships (including one built in the Viking settlement at Dublin around 1042) exemplify the extent of ship-based trade even at that early date. The origins and designs are explored still further at various states in the book where the links between Scandinavia and the world are explored. Trade routes extended through Iceland, Greenland, and eventually North America in the west and via major rivers and coastal routes into central Europe in the east.

Chapter 2 “Boats and ships before AD 800” shows how both written and artistic materials can be used along with archaeological evidence to study the development of early vessels. These lay the foundation for the exploration in Chapter 3 of the longship, the term most commonly associated with Viking vessels in contemporary culture, although, as we learn in Chapter 3, only one ancient text actually called them longships. The chapter includes an interesting discussion on claims in the Anglo Saxon Chronicle that the British King Alfred the Great designed the longship in AD 896/7 and draws on pictorial evidence of shipbuilding techniques preserved in the Bayeux tapestry that tells the story of the Norman invasion of England in 1066. Chapter 4 continues the broadly chronological theme begun in the previous two chapters and takes us through boat developments up to the late medieval period. Throughout each of these chapters, Crumlin-Pedersen shows how the subject received much popular attention through reconstructions of ancient ships and trial voyages on their ancient routes.

Chapter 5 describes the holistic concept, now central to maritime archaeology, of the Maritime Cultural Landscape, and through several Scandinavian examples shows how linked human and natural influences shape the coastal and marine landscape. This approach has provided unique insights into the patterns of life of past coastal communities, and the book offers several fascinating Scandinavian examples. The final chapter explores how ship images have been used in different media and settings and notes that, with the exception of the ancient Egyptians, no other society than the Scandinavian has developed such an affinity with their shipping heritage. Boats are depicted widely in coins,

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artwork, and ornamentation on weapons but are perhaps best known for their association with graves. The Viking ship burials are the best known, but boat burials are known from as early as the first century and involve many vessels from simple log boats to longships. The reasons for boat burials and the myth of Valhalla are explored in this chapter, and some of the best examples of Viking Age ship burials are described.

The material in this book is derived from Crumlin-Pedersen's long experience, and a good deal of the material appears in more detailed monographs of the Viking Ship Museum and the Roskilde Centre. The book, however, is an excellent introduction to the field of Maritime Archaeology and in particular the contributions of the Roskilde group. It is easily readable by the nonspecialist, and I expect that coastal researchers will find much of interest in this whirlwind trip through the world of Maritime Archaeology. The book is lavishly illustrated and is wonderfully laid out; the reader seldom has to turn a page to find a figure being referred to in the text. This makes the book easily readable, and the illustrations, mostly in full colour, broaden its general appeal. Although the writing varies in style between personal recollection and a more technical approach in places, it is an engaging read that will appeal to a wide audience of coastal and marine researchers as well as archaeologists.

Andrew Cooper
University of Ulster

Beach Management: Principles and Practices. By Williams, A. and Micallef, A., 2009. London: Earthscan, 445 p. Hardcover. \$US 117.00.

This is an interesting book that fills a gap in the literature, one that has long awaited fulfillment. Patience in the coastal research community is rewarded because this book covers a gamut of topics relevant to the management of beaches within the overarching purview of integrated coastal zone management. The first couple hundred pages in the book deal with professional-type papers, each making up one of nine chapters. The rest of the book, roughly the other half, contains case studies that are highly variable in approach. Overall, however, they make a notable contribution to the beginning chapters and provide some relief in the form of commentaries and opinions. Together, each half contributes important aspects of beach management that collectively make up a holistic approach. The first nine chapters are as follows: (1) An Introduction to Beach Management, (2) Fundamental Concepts of Beach Management, (3) Theoretical Models for Determining Beach Management Strategy and Management Plans, (4) Beach Management Guidelines, (5) Beach User Questionnaire Surveys, (6) Environmental Risk Management, (7) Innovative Application of Selected Management Tools to the Beach Environment, (8) Beach Award and Rating Systems, and (9) A Bathing Area Registration and Classification Scheme. The twelve case studies are: (1) Beach Water Safety Management, (2) Managing Cars on Beaches: A Case Study from Ireland, (3) Ameliorative Strategies at Balneário Piçarras Beach, (4) From Global to Local: Marine Policy and Legislation, (5) River Mouth Lagoon Science and Management, (6)

Protection Projects at Poetto and Cala Gonone Beaches (Sardinia, Italy), (7) A Proactive Programme for Managing Beaches and Dunes on a Developed Coast: A Case Study of Avalon, New Jersey, USA, (8) Analysis of User's Perceptions at Praia Central, Balneário Camboriú (Santa Catarina, Brazil), (9) The Oregon Coast Experience: Good Management but 'Bad Apples' (A Personal Assessment), (10) A Holistic Approach to Beach Management at Çirali, Turkey: A Model of Conservation, Integrated Management and Sustainable Development, (11) New Directions in Beach Management in the Barcelona Metropolitan Area Coastal Systems (Catalonia, Spain), and (12) Beach Consequences of an Industrial Heritage. Clearly, the book covers a wide range of topics that will strike the fancy of many different types of researchers, whether they focus on biophysical process, management *per se*, sociology, or socio-economics. There is ample room for discussion of many different points of view, and this provides a healthy and invigorating intellectual environment.

The book is well illustrated with halftones and line drawings. There are numerous tables and sideline callouts that are referred to as 'boxes.' These contain ancillary information and explanations so as not to interrupt the flow of the text. I found these boxes of information to be a quite useful adjunct to the book. There are so many interesting items in the book that it is hard to discuss all of them. I pick here some things that were fun and little known to me, for example, the various beach rating schemes from around the world. I had no idea there were so many different approaches to evaluating beach quality. Living in Florida and knowing Dr. Stephen Leatherman of Florida International University in Miami, I was aware of his National Healthy Beaches Campaign (NHBC), which annually receives media attention for his list of the best major public recreational (swimming) beaches in the United States. However, there are many more rating systems depending on geography, *viz.* the Blue Flag (www.blueflag.org) award scheme (Europe), Environmental Campaigns (ENCAMS) (www.encams.org), The Good Beach Guide (www.goodbeachguide.co.uk), the Green Sea Initiative (www.dwrcymru.com), the Blue Wave of the Clean Beaches Council (www.cleanbeaches.org), the Green Globe Awards, the National Aquatic Litter Group (NAGL) (www.environment-agency.co.uk), Beach Safety in Australia (www.surflifesaving.com.au), the European Eco-Management and Audit Scheme (EMAS), the GuidaBlue (Blue Guide) (www.legambiente.it), the Dolphin Scale (Romania), and Quercus (National Association of Conservation of Nature) (Portugal). There is thus more than enough to keep readers busy and interested.

I know of no other recent book on beach management that is of this high caliber and that covers such a diverse array of topics in such a professional manner. This book will be of immense value to coastal researchers in academia, government agencies, and nongovernmental agencies (NGOs), and I heartily recommend it to those working in proprietary consultancies as well. I recommend it without reservation and suggest that it be placed not only in university libraries the world over, but it should be among the most used reference works for those with managerial specialties. This book is, in a word, a treasure trove for all those working with beaches, and this includes coastal engineers, because they

need a new perspective on how society works when it comes to the role of beaches in our lives on the coast. Like many things in life, we tend not to value them until they are lost, and then it is too late. This book shows us how to value and protect our beaches so that they can fulfill the multifunctional roles in such demand by society.

Last but not least, I want to commend the editors and authors for donating the royalties from the sale of this book to cancer research. To me, this says a lot about the spirit and big hearts of these people who are obviously sincere about their work in beach management. This gesture also bespeaks of their lack of the materialism with which most of the world is so preoccupied. There are many lessons here, not only in the content of the book, but also those to be learned from the actions of the editors and authors.

Charlie Finkl

Editor-in-Chief, *Journal of Coastal Research*
Coastal Education and Research Foundation, Inc.
West Palm Beach, FL 33411, U.S.A.

Spa. By Allison Arieff, B. Burkhart with Adrienne Arieff, D. Bishop and I.R. Edwards. No index, no bibliography, no site maps. Cologne (Köln) Taschen, In A5 size, 251 p, illustrated (in color), trilingual text in English, German, and French. No price shown.

This book sets perhaps a record for having the shortest title: a three-letter word. And it is a misnomer. Spa is the name of a city in Belgium that is famed for its mineral waters and has been the preferred haven of the famed and the rich, from Tsar Peter the Great of Russia to the last German emperor Wilhelm II.¹ Its reputation has been such that cities the world over dubbed themselves Spa to attract “curists” in quest of relief from a variety of ailments. It puzzles this reviewer how a book titled *Spa* can be on sale when there is no reference at all to Spa, about which Nobel Prize of Medicine laureate Charles de Duve wrote: “When speaking of a mineral spring or a watering-place in the country named Albion, people say, quite simply, a ‘spa.’ Coming from a nation whose insular particularism is well-known, this adoption as a part of the contemporary Anglo-Saxon language sanctifies better than any testimonial could do, the renown of the mineral springs whose fourth century of exports is being celebrated...” It became, in the aftermath of World War I, with the advent of social tourism and socialized medical care, accessible to all economic layers of the public. This journal recently published an extensive article on thermalism and thalassotherapy.²

¹ Cremer, L.M., 1983. *The Original Spa Waters of Belgium*. Spa, Belgium: Société Anonyme des Eaux de Spa Monopole, 103p. [in quarto]; Chrouet, W., 1729. *La connaissance des eaux minérales d'Aix-la-Chapelle, de Chaudfontaine et de Spa*: Liège, no publisher named. [Note: Aix-la-Chapelle is the French language name for Aachen, a city then in Prussia]

² Charlier, R.H. and Chaineux M.-C., 2009. The healing sea: a sustainable coastal ocean resource: thalassotherapy. *Journal of Coastal Research*. 25(4), 838–856.

Spa is superbly illustrated by colour photographs of remarkable artistic quality; in fact the pictures overwhelm what appears to be a paucity of text. One could expect that a view of Spa, a word about its origin, development, and facilities be included in a volume that supposedly celebrates the benefits of hydrotherapy in its various approaches and that is launched by a citation of the late movie actress Mae West: “When in doubt, take a bath.” Nothing along those lines about Spa is to be found between these covers. The book reminds this reviewer of one he read some time ago “*The Rich Man’s Guide to the Riviera*,” only these pages are more a fancy catalogue of the properties of a hotel chain and its affiliates throughout the world.

If the real Spa is ignored, France, for instance, with over a 100 treatment facilities on the coast and some more inland, does not fare much better: Only one site is listed and the accompanying text is devoted to Bordeaux wine with therapeutics allocated a single line at its closing. In Japan, Hakone is famed for its baths, but it is difficult to make out whether any of the three sites mentioned in the book is located near that area. Not a word either about Romanian, Bulgarian, or other Black Sea thalassotherapy centers. Of the 71 “spas” mentioned, about a third could be considered thalasso-facilities, the others being thermal waters watering places inland. There is no index; there are no references, and there are no location maps included.

This book is part of the twenty-fifth anniversary celebration of Taschen’s, the publisher, which placed the book under the banner of “The art of making books.” The exquisite volume indeed makes a very attractive “coffee-table book” that is a feast for the eyes but will hardly guide you to whatever a “spa” is intended to be.

Roger H. Charlier
Vrije Universiteit Brussel
Brussels, Belgium
and
Department of Geosciences
Florida Atlantic University
Boca Raton, FL 33431, U.S.A.

Encyclopedia of the World’s Coastal Landforms. By Eric Bird (ed.), index, 1500p. 1379 illus. in color. In 2 volumes, not available separately, hardcover, 2010. Springer Verlag, Heidelberg, EUR699.00. An electronic version is available.

Eric Bird is entitled to congratulations for achieving a real *tour de force* by garnering such an *aeropage* of authors and bringing together a reference book—in fact two books—of this dimension. True the price is a whopping \$980 (at the current €699 exchange rate) and thereby, unfortunately, bringing the work out of financial range of most individual researchers and entirely out of reach of Africans and then some. Several librarians echoed the same reaction. The electronic version may somewhat alleviate this situation, though the “user fee” is not known to this reviewer. True again, it is an unusual luxury to have the superb photographs reproduced in color.

Geographers will regret that few maps are included, some without scale, legend, or geographical coordinates; they would have been exceptionally useful in a book that is polychromatic.

The publishers claim that this is a unique work and list it as a first edition. It looks far more like a remarkably updated version of a 2004 Springer publication with a nearly similar title; kindred material can be found in *World Coasts* (2003), the *Encyclopedia of Coastal Science* (2005), the Hutchinson-&-Ross-published *Encyclopedia of Beaches and Coastal Environments* (1982), and a forthcoming volume *European Coastal Erosion*. The originality of the current encyclopedia is to group information disseminated in the works just mentioned, and other texts, to provide a timely update and to focus on a single topic. To have the illustrations in color is evidently a plus that will be appreciated.

One may perhaps raise an eyebrow on the emphasis accorded areas of English language and culture; they certainly represent a large segment of the world—remember the saying “the sun never sets on the British Empire”—but it leaves the reader with a feeling of a certain bias. On the other hand, the result is a never-before detailed description of those regions, minutely and comprehensively presented.

The books themselves are divided in broad sections, each preceded by excellent “editorial” send-offs. The order is, as can be expected from an editor who is an erudite geographer, geographical rather than alphabetical. Thus volume I starts for some reason with North America and meticulously follows political divisions, thereby isolating Alaska from neighbouring Canadian territory. Delaware and New Jersey do not rate

separate chapter headings, but Hawaii is placed with the American landmass states and the lacustrine Midwest is handled separately, a logical decision because it represents hundreds of kilometers of, albeit inland, coastlines. These same Great Lakes are picked up—in *partim*—again when Canada is analyzed. Bermuda is part of Central and South America that follow suit.

Central and South America follow suit. Mexico is appropriately included with the other Pacific bordering areas, and its eastern coasts are listed according to characteristics of physical geography placed with the Caribbean coasts. However the Caribbean islands constitute a section apart.

These remarks prove how difficult it is to select a logical grouping, and the editor had no alternative but to vary the rules. It may cause some “discontinuity” and force the researcher to go back and forth between different parts of the volumes, a lesser inconvenience with the “hard” copy than with the electronic version.

The succeeding segment deals with the British Isles (where the Channel Islands have been included though physically they are closer to Brittany and Normandy [îles anglo-normandes]), that have been dissected so thoroughly that there are no less than 26 subheadings (27 with the Channel Islands), nearly as many as for all of Europe. The Russian enclave of Kaliningrad is even discussed twice, once as part of “Europe” (8.7) and once as part of “European” Russia (9.6).

Constance C. Axelrod
Coastal Education and Research Foundation