A History of the World in Sixteen Shipwrecks by Stewart Gordon (review)

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Journal of World History, Volume 27, Number 2, June 2016, pp. 353-355 (Review)

Published by University of Hawai'i Press
DOI: https://doi.org/10.1353/jwh.2016.0105

conflict required new thinking about the principles of government and after the Revolution and Constitution had radically changed the framework of aggregate politics from the imperial to the national.

For readers of the *Journal of World History*, who may be looking for larger comparisons and connections to non-British, Western Hemispheric, and imperial experiences, this collection does not offer a great deal. We might expect some useful rumination on such expanded dimensions in the conclusion but that reconsideration is a disappointment. The essay reiterates, often in convoluted jargon, that the seventeenth- and eighteenth-century colonies were all quite different provincial societies that existed in tension with metropolitan influences and forces. That does very little to keep Murrin's sense of dynamic discovery and enquiry alive. Those of his students who believe such a goal is truly worthwhile might consider publishing a collection of some of Murrin's best pieces along with a full bibliography of his writings. Such ready availability would do the man another significant honor and put the full, suggestive power of his writings, much better than this volume does, in the hands of another cohort of the fresh and eager student minds that John Murrin loved to inspire.

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A History of the World in Sixteen Shipwrecks. By STEWART GORDON. Lebanon, N.H.: University Press of New England, 2015. 290 pp. $29.95 (cloth).

The test of Stewart Gordon's *A History of the World in Sixteen Shipwrecks* is whether the book delivers on its promise to demonstrate global integration through the lens of sixteen surprisingly different shipwreck case studies . . . and it does. Of course, it is a selective history, as the title states *sixteen* shipwrecks and not *sixty*, but the format meets the objective well. Each of these wreck studies opens a window to a particular part of a long arc of transition from local to regional to global maritime human activity, as nautical technology evolved to allow broader participation in the maritime world.

This is chiefly the history of the world told in case studies, each of which begins with the technical evolution of the ship before transitioning to historical connections. The focus on material culture explains some of the absence of social history, such as the adventures of Jack Tar ashore, or the politics of piracy. Ship evolution has of course been a part

of longer more specialized works (Richard Woodman's *The History of the Ship* [1997] and Lincoln Paine's *The Sea and Civilization* [2013] are particularly notable), but here Gordon writes for a more general public, as well as historians with a penchant for global studies. In a nutshell, *Sixteen Shipwrecks* provides an enjoyable and easily accessible short introduction to the roles of maritime history and nautical archaeology in a global history context. Well-chosen illustrations assist readers new to the maritime field, and endnotes cite a range of major sources and authorities for more information.

Most chapters provide an introduction to a specific wreck, notes on its discovery and archaeological interpretation, and a broader discussion of the vessel type, in a manner that allows the author to draw salient connections to local, regional, and global history. Sometimes major events are tied to individual ships, as with the *Lusitania*, World War I, and the onset of submarine depredations in the Atlantic. Elsewhere it is the vessel type that is the focus, as with the Bremen Cog, the Hanseatic League, and the beginnings of the merchant navy. The material culture of each site often includes the cargo, opening discussions on production and consumption, and trade patterns. Chapters conclude with an "ending of the age" section, describing how that particular nautical technology eventually passed from dominance.

The variety of Gordon's selections in *Sixteen Shipwrecks* is interesting. Case studies run a range from dugouts to funeral barges to war junks to ships of the line to river steamboats to passenger liners. One "wreck" is not even a wreck at all, but a collection of merchant documents describing the loss of vessels in the ancient Persian trade world. Variation adds spice to the telling. Concluding with the *Exxon Valdez* and the *Costa Concordia* reveals the author's effort to integrate maritime and mainstream history. Nautical evolution is not some antiquarian oddity, but a transforming influence leading directly to how we use the ocean today. Some elements, though, are lost. The lore of wooden vessels vanishes almost completely behind a steel wall of characterless floating boxes as cargo and passenger marine transportation attain maximum efficiencies.

Several maritime maxims are called out to good purpose by the author: the conservative nature of nautical technology and ship design, for the price of failure may be death; the uniquely Western creation of the large armed merchant galleon, a precursor to an equally unique private commercial navy; the balance between speed and armament in the race for resources; the emergence of global trade and global conflict first in the maritime environment. Some might contend with the choice of one wreck site over another: Why not the Quanzhou wreck

from medieval China? Or the Arabian Belitung wreck? A Pacific voyaging canoe? A container ship? A Western whaler? But we all have our favorites, and elements of those technologies are often covered within the contents of other chapters. In the end it is not the choice of wreck that counts, but the strong linkage between maritime and world history in an enjoyable format. If we still need to be reminded of this, Gordon's work aptly demonstrates that maritime studies, and more importantly specific elements of nautical technology, are an indispensable part of understanding global history. This is an ocean planet; these are Wallerstein's tools of the world system.

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Asia Inside Out: Connected Places. Edited by ERIC TAGLIACOZZO, HELEN F. SIU, and PETER PERDUE. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2015. 418 pp. $45.00 (cloth).

Indexes are the very last place to start reading a book. How can they tell us anything? In the index of the second installment of the *Asia Inside Out* trilogy, the entries with the highest number of citations are nations, such as Burma, China, India, Japan, South Korea, and Vietnam, closely followed by concepts like place-making and boundaries and borderlands. If nothing else, this tells us that in a volume that seeks to challenge the spatial boundaries of Asia as a whole, individual authors still tend to fall back on a vocabulary that invokes its "intact national spaces" (p. 6). Even though the collection's aim is to examine how spaces and places emerged from historical and social conditions without presupposing their bounded existence, we lack adequate terminology to capture all the complexities of what the editors call "regional assemblages" (p. 7), or what Charles Wheeler calls a "space of flows" (p. 56). Naming a space amounts to attempting to delineate that space, and to assert possession of or control over it, and using that name legitimizes that attempt, as Donald Emmerson already argued in 1984, and Martin Lewis and Kären Wigen further considered in their 1997 *The Myth of Continents*.[3] But how do we discuss specific regional spaces with-

[3] Donald K. Emmerson, "'Southeast Asia': What's in a Name?," *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 15, no. 1 (1984): 1–21; Martin W. Lewis and Kären E. Wigen, *The Myth of Continents: A Critique of Metageography* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), especially 21–33.