

*Lisa Hellman, Hanna Hodacs, Aryo Makko and
Steve Murdoch (eds)*

Connected Oceans: A Festschrift to Leos Müller

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SINCE THE 1990s, Leos Müller has developed an outstanding reputation for his work on eighteenth century Swedish history. His scope has extended into maritime, economic and diplomatic arenas, research themes which thus have tended to start from Sweden but extend to the global from there. This range is very much reflected in the contributions to this festschrift, and it is remarkable and impressive to note how the editors and many of the contributors acknowledge and pay tribute to his work in their chapters. The volume is an interesting and, in some cases, intriguingly eclectic, collection of (fairly brief) chapters woven together by a team of editors, all of whom have collaborated with Müller over the last decade and, in some instances, for much longer than that.

In terms of the merits of the book, and reflecting Müller's interests well, the nineteen chapters in the volume cover themes that hop from international trade to political, diplomatic and maritime history, with a smaller number dipping into archaeology and ethnology. The contributions cover the early modern and modern. Given how many of the contributors write most frequently in languages besides English, it is impressive how they, the four editors and language editor (Alexia Grosjean) have produced polished chapters which, uniformly, read well, with very few typographic errors or other stylistic errors evident to this reader. This impressively diverse collection of scholars notwithstanding, it is a pity that there are no biographies of the contributors to guide readers to specific chapters. An index would also have helped find references to, for example, different geographical or thematic areas which crop up in multiple chapters. My own interest in the seventeenth century, as well as Grimshaw's and Murdoch's contributions, left me keen to see more writing on that period, albeit that would take readers away from much of Müller's most important work.

A common thread to most of the chapters is, unsurprisingly, the Swedish Baltic and, to a lesser extent, the Swedish North Sea. However, Rönnbäck and Murdoch provide strong chapters which are trans-Atlantic in scope. The latter focuses, in an excellent piece, on Bohemian transatlantic exiles in a way which, intentionally or not, seems to link rather poignantly to Müller's own story as a migrant to Sweden from what was then Czechoslovakia in 1989. Makko's chapter takes us to the Mediterranean. The pieces by Marzagalli, Weiss, Wanner, Hunt and Ängeby, for instance, bring readers to 'entangled seas' at the transoceanic level. The chapters on dogs and 'beastly diplomacy', the 'faces of the dead' and life cycle of ships are more imaginative, and suitably challenging, pieces.

Taken as a whole, the contributions show that while Sweden was vital in ensuring the Baltic remained the 'mother of all trades' through to the eighteenth century, the country's engagements have connected the local with the global increasingly. The book signals to this reader the desirability, in 2023, of revisiting the comparisons and contrasts that could be found between Sweden's experience and that of neighbouring Baltic and North Sea areas (from Denmark to Pomerania, Poland, the modern Baltic States and their predecessors, Russia and Finland). In these cases, there are limits to the amount of English-language scholarship available. In short, one hopes for a diverse, appealing and dynamic range of chapters from a festschrift and this volume provides that.

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