Tawney and Postan did work worth remembering, and they too built on important predecessors like F. W. Maitland (1850–1906) and Paul Vinogradoff (1854–1925) at least equally forgotten today and not mentioned in this volume. What all these scholars, past and present, had in common was that they recognized the currents of their times and incorporated fresh ideas into their work

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The Baltic: A History. By Michael North. Translated by Kenneth Kronenberg. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2015. Pp. 427. $39.95, cloth.
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This long sweep begins in the tenth century with Viking forays and ends in the early twenty-first with problems of European integration. Geographically the range is from the upper reaches of rivers entering into the Baltic to the North Sea. Each of the ten chronological chapters begins with a page on some location that illustrates the principal trends of the period along with a somewhat informative map and often a relevant illustration. The effort is to be comprehensive so politics, the economy, social structure, and culture each get their turn for each phase in the history of the region. Cultural contact and exchange, especially through trade, receive outsized attention. The extensive range, topical and chronological, means that digging deeply into issues proves impossible. The tendency is to description rather than analysis, especially in discussing the economy. While that is understandable for the chapters on the Middle Ages and the Renaissance where sources are sparse and the period is not well known, for more recent centuries the lack of depth will detract from the value of the work for economic historians.

This is a history about the lands bordering the Baltic. All are included, though as with any work on a region the problems of defining the exact scope proves difficult. There are, the author sees, many "Baltics" constructed differently over time (p. 2) which creates license to expand and contract the geographical scope for each period. The changing boundaries of polities, emerging and disappearing, presents problems of description. The complex interaction of peoples and languages over the centuries makes the task even more difficult, the problems of what names to use for towns being the obvious example. The concordance, in 10 languages (pp. 331–336), of how people identified urban centers is a real asset. With the large states, Germany and Russia, their cultural nationalism had an indelible impact on the region in the last two centuries. Their interests, however, stretched far beyond the Baltic. How far inland the narrative reaches in dealing with them is an issue often avoided. The solution to the problem is a focus on just the portion of the German kingdom and empire with a Baltic coast and to give limited consideration to Russia.

The discussion of the shift to a form of serfdom in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries does not serve to fully clarify what is a thorny historical problem. The claims for the importance of the development of the cog, a type of high medieval ship used by German merchants, in changing the commercial balance in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries does not take account of recent discussion of the emergence of the design. There is no concerted effort to draw conclusions to round out what is an ambitious study.

Translated comfortably from *Geschichte der Ostsee*, published in Germany in 2011, the work has been updated in the closing pages with events in the intervening years.

A number of the illustrations as well as some minor references and comments in the German version did not make it into the English edition. The addition of dates for the lives of named individuals is a valuable addition for English readers. The work "serves as a sort of final report for the Graduate Program 'Contact Area Mare Balticum: Foreignness and Integration in the Baltic Region' " (p. 397) carried out with a number of graduate students at the University of Greifswald between 2000 and 2010, and it shows signs of its origins. Greifswald and the area around received more consideration than their role in Baltic history warrants. The extensive discussion of high culture, especially from the seventeenth century on, indicates the distribution of tasks among the researchers as well as the author's own interests. There is a level of detail about politics and the political actors in the twentieth century which gives the appearance of a report. Also adding to that quality is the coverage of well-established topics which frequently offers little that is novel. At times the work takes on the air of a catalogue of names and events. The bibliography is thorough, though the notes are sparse. For economic history the book gives the essentials of what is a long and convoluted history. For background on a European region over a long period the single volume offers a sound starting point.

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UNITED STATES AND CANADA

The Bank War: Andrew Jackson, Nicholas Biddle, and the Fight for American Finance. By Paul Kahan. Yardley, PA: Westholme Publishing, 2015. Pp. xii, 187. $28.00, cloth.
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Consider a public fight between a U.S. President concerned over the power of a central bank and the bank's president defending its track record with a set of increasingly partisan politicians along for the ride. Despite occurring over 180 years ago, the "Bank War" between President Andrew Jackson and Nicholas Biddle, the President of the Second Bank of the United States seems quite familiar in the modern context. The war started as the typical American political conflict between "nonpartisan technocratic policy making and democratic accountability" (p. xi), but quickly became personal to the two men involved. The resulting scorched earth policy led to the nation's largest financial panic of the nineteenth century. Paul Kahan's account provides an introduction to the conflict and sets the war in the broader historical context. Indeed, it was the turning point for many U.S. economic and political features. The period saw the first congressional censure of a president, the first Senate rejection of a cabinet nominee, the first filibuster, and the solidification of the two-party system.

Most studies focus on Jackson as either a villain due to the negative economic outcomes (e.g., Bray Hammond's *Banks and Politics in America from the Revolution to the Civil War*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1957) or a well-intentioned champion of the common man whose actions had unintended consequences (e.g., Robert Remini's *Andrew Jackson and the Bank War*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1967). Kahan's narrative focuses on the backgrounds, beliefs, and actions of both men. The book paints Jackson as the "self-righteous ideologue...who ignored evidence that contradicted his belief [that the bank influenced politics was bad for the country]" and Biddle as the "politically naive technocrat insensible to the changes reshaping the