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BOOK REVIEWS

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Coastal Erosion and Protection in Europe. Enzo Pranzini and Allan Williams (eds.), 2013. London: Routledge, Taylor and Francis Group, 457p. ISBN 978-1-84971-339-9. Bibliography, index, illustrated, notes on contributors. Hardbound, £ 120.

This is an interesting book that in many ways adds to and updates some prior related efforts *viz*. Randazzo, Serra Raventos, and Lanza (2013), describing coastal erosion in Europe (Coastal Erosion in Europe: A Need for Action, EUROSION [2004], MESSINA [2006], Roebeling, Coelho, and Reis [2011]). This volume stands on its own merits and provides a very good overview that meets the expectations of the title. This book is comprehensive and complete within itself, providing up-to-date information and perspectives on the state of coastal erosion and protection in Europe. Because this volume deals with many subjects, all of which are interrelated, it is somewhat difficult to know where to initiate a commentary. Therefore, let's start with some overall impressions and then move to a few details.

There are 22 chapters written by a cadre of experts from 20 countries, with two chapters being devoted to an introduction and conclusion. Also included are notes on the professional backgrounds of the chapter contributors, a foreword by Aysen Ergin, and a preface by the editors. The book is profusely illustrated by color photographs and diagrams that show states of coastal erosion and examples of protection efforts. Chapters follow a general topical organization that includes information on coastal overview of the country, hydrometeorological characteristics, coastal morphology, and coastal protection efforts. Also included are summaries of coastal cultural development, growth of settlements (including urban and commercial areas), and historical points of interest related to coastal management/mismanagement. Many chapters contain maps showing the spatial distribution of coastal types and relevant information pertaining to coastal processes in general, sometimes with specific examples in case studies. That is the general layout, but as might be expected, some chapters are much more complex than others depending on the nature of the coast, as some countries have much longer and more complicated shores compared to others with shorter coastal segments and more uniform shoreline conditions. The organization of all of the chapters is thus easily comprehended with major differences highlighted and appreciated.

Such a comment might not normally be germane to a review, but it is made here because an attempt to expound and indicate extent conditions of the coasts of Europe is not a simple matter. As a minor point, it is perhaps worth mentioning that not all coasts of Europe are included because they are not eroding because of isostatic rebound from the last Pleistocene glaciation. In the general area of Fennoscandia, rebound (uplift) exceeds the rate of sea-level rise, and so the coastline is prograding not retrograding. The remaining European coasts that generally show evidence of shoreline retreat and the problems associated with that landward translation of the shore are subjects of this book.

At the risk of being somewhat tedious, I list the chapter authors because it reads like a Who's Who in Coastal Science for those regions. The editors got the best people in each country to write the chapters; therefore, it is worthwhile to recognize who did what in this compendium. This is how it stacks up: **Introduction** (Enzo Pranzini and Allan Williams), **Russia** (Ruben Kosyan, Marina Kylenko, Daria Ryabchuk, and Boris Chubarenko), **Sweden** (Magnus Larson and Hans Hanson), **Baltic States** (Hannes Tõnisson, Kaarel Orviku, Jānis Lapinskis, Saulius Gulbinskas, and Rimas Zaromskis), **Poland** (Kazimierz Furmanczyk), **Denmark** (Per Sorensen), **Germany** (Jürgen Jensen and Klaus Schwarzer), **The Netherlands** (Fran van der Meulen, Bert van der Valk, and Bas Arens), **Belgium** (Roger H. Charlier), **Great Britain** (Simon J. Blott, Robert W. Duck, Michael R. Phillips, Nigel I. Pontee, Kenneth Pye, and Allan Williams), **Ireland** (Andrew Cooper), **France** (Edward J. Anthony and François Sabatier), **Spain** (Vicente Gracia, Agustín Sánchez-Arcilla, and Giorgio Anfuso), **Portugal** (Óscar Ferreira and Ana Matias), **Italy** (Enzo Pranzini), **Eastern Adriatic** (Kristina Pikelj, Vojislav Dragnic, and Nemanja Malovrazic), **Albania** (Gjovalin Gruda and Merita Dollma), **Greece** (George Alexandrakis, George Ghionis, Serafim E, Poulos, and Nikolaos A. Kampanis), **Bulgaria** (Margarita Stancheva), **Romania** (Adrian Stancia, Nicolae Panin, and Glicherie Caraivan), **Ukraine** (Yuri N. Goryacjkin), and **Conclusions** (Enzo Pranzini, Lilian Wetzel, and Allan Williams). There you have it: A veritable tour de force of coastal researchers from well-known maritimes to lesser-known but still important shores.

This book offers many things and as such it can withstand multiple reviews, as researchers will find informational treasures hidden in these pages as well as things to quibble about. Quibbles I have not, as I prefer to praise the laudable as a worthy effort overseen by the editors and carried out by the authors. For those of us who are tried and true practitioners of shore protection and students of the causes of coastal erosion, the book offers many new insights in the form of commentaries relating to overviews of coastal segments in the various countries. The recitations of historical coastal evolution (trends and changes), coastal geomorphology and geological history, salient agents causing erosion, shoreline classification into coastal types, coastal defense, and coastal settlement evolution are necessary to comprehension of the nature of the problem. And, unless one can identify the nature of the problem, there is no hope for a solution. In this regard, Europe is no different

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from many other coastal sites where people have built too close to the shore. Much of the coastal erosion problem results from historical accident where people were not particularly aware of shoreline retreat and the dangers or consequences of building permanent structures near the shore. These historical backgrounds for many of the chapters are a most welcome and refreshing look at causes of the shore erosion problem and the defense measures applied.

What kind of a book is this? This is not a rhetorical question as it has practical significance. To me, this is a reference work to be read piecemeal according to specific questions for specific countries. Yes, the compendium is an overview, and it would be quite a personal effort to summarize the main points from each country into a cogent statement for the whole coast of Europe were it not for the valiant efforts of Enzo Pranzini, Lilian Wetzel, and Allan Williams, who put together the conclusions. Kudos to them for preparing an integrating synopsis for the European coastal scene. One of the most important points they conclude is that countries need to recognize that the whole coast needs to be managed in an articulated form. This point cannot be overemphasized as so many shore protection efforts tend to focus on problem areas, the fixing of those problem areas, and then forgetting about the areas. The problem is that solution of an erosional problem in an area may actually cause or accentuate downdrift erosion, which causes another or new problem. And so it goes in *pater noster* fashion down the coast until there is string of problem areas requiring interventions. Last but not least, it is appreciated that humans must work in concert with Nature as she is ever more powerful and has time on her side. Human life spans are finite, and, even though engineering works may persist for scores of generations, Nature still wins as geodynamic and hydrometeorological forces shape the shore more boldly than any human effort no matter how much we may be impressed by our temporal power that lasts but a blink of the eye by Earth standards.

This reference work contains numerous citations at the ends of chapters, and there is a useful subject-author-geographic index at the end of the book. My perusal of the book started with the conclusions so I could get an overall impression of what was being considered between the covers. I then looked at the frontis materials (front matter: Notes on Contributors, Foreward, and Preface). Next came the Introduction by the editors. Having done that bit of homework, I felt prepared to delve into the various chapters at random to look up this or that bit of information that I was curious about. Being pleasantly surprised to find more than what I initially queried brought about a feeling of satisfaction that the editors and authors had done a very credible job of presenting the case for coastal erosion and protection in Europe. Although somewhat pricey for the average scholar, the book is handsomely produced, and I cannot see how a researcher who is serious about the study of shore erosion and protection can do without this work. The book belongs on your bookshelf along with prior works on similar or related subjects.

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