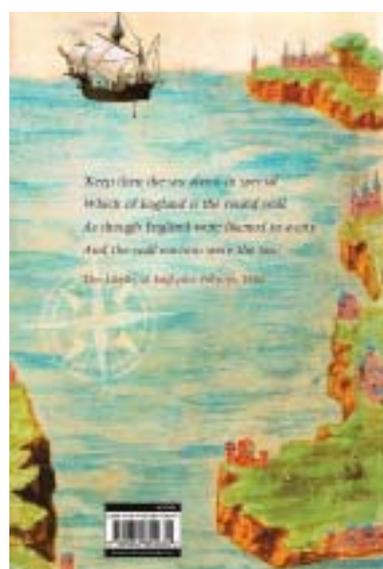
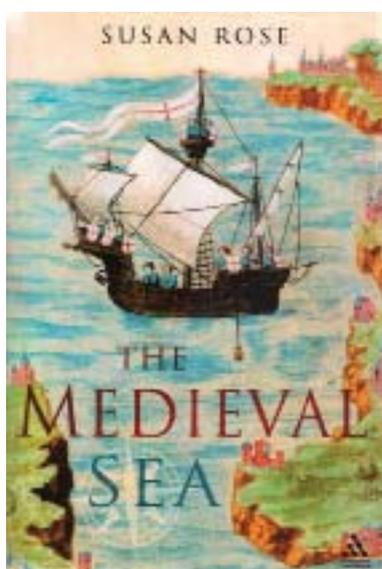




## BOOK REVIEWS

Rose, S. 2007. *The Medieval Sea*. - London & New York, Hambledon Continuum

Yardeni Vorst



This book by Susan Rose deals with aspects of the sea and seafaring in Medieval times in northern Europe, The Mediterranean and North Africa. Through time (the period 1000-1500 AD) Rose illustrates the differences in Europe in attitudes towards the sea, in shipbuilding practises and how changing coastlines and rising sea levels together with change in the political climate could alter all this in decades. In her first chapter she touches on the fear of some and the adventure it brought to others to venture out to sea, as is vividly described in Anglo-Saxon and Old Norse literature. This attitude would change in the centuries to come as seafaring became increasingly important in social and economic terms. In her second chapter on shipbuilding she explains that the information

drawn from documents, pictorial evidence and the archaeological record is far from complete to paint detailed pictures on the subject, that is for northern Europe in the early Middle Ages. For the Mediterranean, especially for cities like Genoa and Venice, the record is more copious, with information on “...*the building and use of ships, including the state fleets of trading and war galleys constructed in the Arsenale, the shipyard of the Venetian Republic, but also technical notes which may be based on manuals for shipwrights.*” (p. 17). A strong point in the book is that the author, after discussing the above, points out to the reader what isn't there: information on the immense level of organisation of local shipbuilding on the riverbanks and foreshores of northern Europe of which no evidence remains.

*"The tradition in southern waters was radically different from that in the Channel and northern waters: only at the end of the Middle Ages did the two begin to come together, producing something much nearer to a common European approach to the building and design of ships."* (p.18).

This divide between northern and southern Europe is also evident in the subsequent chapters, which give a clear and detailed description of Medieval navigation, trade and warfare. Here, I feel, a glossary to explain more unusual terms like 'osmund iron' and 'fustian', would have been helpful. Overall, the book is a good introduction to Medieval maritime Europe and is especially commendable for bringing out the human aspect in describing subjects of maritime warfare and economics.

Rose, S. 2007. *The Medieval Sea*. - London & New York, Hambledon Continuum. 210 pp. ISBN 978-1-85285-563-5. Price \$ 60.00 (hardback; [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com)).