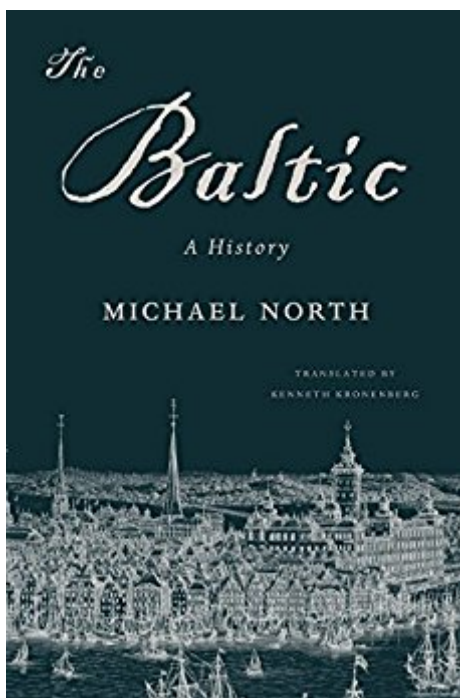


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# The Baltic



## Synopsis

From the Vikings to the EU the Baltic has been a Nordic Mediterranean, a shared maritime zone with distinct patterns of trade, cultural exchange, and conflict. Covering a thousand years in a part of the globe where seas are more connective than land, Michael North's overview transforms the way we think about one of the world's great waterways.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

For someone who considered himself quite well versed in European history, this was full of new insights and many surprising changes of fortune for the entities that stubbornly held on to language and customs through virtual disappearances into neighboring powers only to reemerge as independent countries with well defined languages and deeply embedded customs and cultures. Perhaps a similar fate will occur in the Middle East countries that are are similarly fractured today.

This is a very detailed book and was just more information than what I needed. A history major

would appreciate it. It was recommended to me to read before my trip to the Baltic Sea

Fascinating reading. I knew the Baltic area had a long history, but this book delves into more detailed history. Very interesting reading.

The book is required for a class that I'm taking at Harvard. The first two thirds of the book consists of endless detail related to the tribes and ancient cities of the Baltic area and the Hanseatic trading league. The last third was fine as it describes events of the last 100 years or so which as a non-scholar was much more interesting to me than the sleep inducing first two thirds.

I really wanted to like this book. I really did. The topic sounded both unfairly neglected and potentially fascinating. But while the book is incredibly detailed, and probably the most informative book on the subject I've ever seen, it's also the driest and least exciting popular history I've ever read. Mr. North seems to provide readers with every single important name, date, event, and place relevant to the history of the Baltic region. But that's all he gives his readers. He doesn't provide any informative descriptions of people or places named, or any descriptions of the battles that are only identified by name yet seem to have altered the course of kings, countries, and alliances. And the sparse maps included provide little information on the ever-changing areas of interest or control on the part of various city-states, countries, and monarchs. In sum, Mr. North's book contains everything you need to pass a test on the region without helping you understand or relate to the people and events it covers. And without making you care about any of it. Mr. North should be commended on his research and obvious knowledge of the region and its history. But I wish this book had been written by someone like John Julius Norwich instead, who understands how to make sweeping histories compelling. I hope that Mr. North, or someone else, someday aggressively revises this book by adding copious illustrations, biographic information about the people and places mentioned, and interesting anecdotes as to them all. It would probably be a two-volume work, but it could be thrilling rather than sleep-inducing.

Dry but thorough. Best thing about this vast topic.

A fantastic history of the Baltic region, and its peoples. Michael North has written a book that is both informative and interesting. Anyone with an interest in the Region or in European history in general would do well to read this work.

This book is a great read if you want to learn the basic history of the Baltic region and how the present configuration came about. One particularly interesting bit of history is all the references to the city of Narva which has recently become the subject of potential war posturing. The book focuses on trade more than anything, which makes sense given the region. Religion, art, war and all the other cultural influences are also mentioned. If you know a good amount of Baltic history then this book can probably be skipped as I'm sure others would have more in depth looks at specific events and phenomenon, but if you want to learn about the Baltic, this is a very good beginning point.

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