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Unreviewed Mixed Matters Article:

Book Review: Road to the Vikings – Bridge between two Worlds by Linda Boye, Klaus Mejer Mynzberg and Mads Thernøe

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The book *Vejen til Vikingerne – broen mellem to verdener* is about the Viking Bridge Project, which was run by Kroppedal Museum in Høje Taastrup, Denmark, and Vikingelandsbyen in Albertslund from 2017-2019. The book describes the project from thought to action and

subsequent dissemination. The Viking Bridge *Haraldsbro* is now a reality and this publication is the final part of the project.



In Denmark, an archaeological find was made years ago of a larger bridge, built over a river valley - the bridge over Raving Enge, which was built in the late 900s. This bridge is the inspiration for the construction of the Harald Bridge itself. The new Viking bridge is in itself both beautiful and exciting, but it also helps to understand the processes and workflows of the past.

Introduction

Vejen til Vikingerne is, in short, the fascinating story of an attempt to build a Viking bridge, with a road course, as it probably would have looked like over 1000 years ago in Denmark. The book is written in Danish and contains a thorough review not only of the project of recreating a Viking bridge, but also of theory and practice in terms of physical and digital dissemination of the ongoing project and the subsequent, finished work. In this project the Viking Bridge *Haraldsbro* was built over Store Vejleådal between the Viking Village and Kroppedal Museum. There has never been a bridge over this river valley – until now.

Contents

The book deals with many different aspects of the project. The first chapters deal with the initial ideas and give background about the Viking Age and finds from this period near the Viking Bridge. There are also descriptions of the archaeological finds that have been used as inspiration for the construction of the Viking Bridge. Prior to the project, studies have been made of known Danish finds of bridges and roads from the Viking Age, which allow the creation of this interpretation of a Viking road. In addition, the exciting work with school children, volunteers and employees from different backgrounds and professional groups who participated in the construction is described. The project is completed with digital dissemination which is further described in the last chapters of the book. The book contains many pictures from the complete construction process, which support the text really well. These images help enliven and illuminate the text. You can sense the school children's hard work in all kinds of weather and you feel involved when costumes have to be sewn and planks have to be made.

Vejen til Vikingerne not only provides a thorough explanation of the construction process, but also discusses authenticity. The original intention was that the bridge and road course could be reconstructed as authentically as possible. Experience from other constructions in the Viking Village, as well as other tested processes, have however meant that, for example, some authentic tools were not used. The authors provide good explanations for these opt-outs. An example of this is replacing the use of an authentic drill, similar to a Viking drill, with a modern drill to make holes for nails in the planks. This change was made to cut the number of working hours and reduce the hard, physical work for the modern workers, among other

reasons. The techniques, however, have been tested which justifies why they have not been used.

A Viking bridge in numbers and digital communication

A particularly interesting chapter dealt with the Viking bridge in numbers - here authors describe thoroughly how much timber was used and there are overviews of hours worked and much more. These numbers may seem dry at first glance, but if you read on you will understand why it is important to summarise these. It is precisely a construction project like this that demonstrates how important it is to perform such experiments. By subsequent evaluation of the work processes used, one can get closer to a more accurate interpretation of the archaeological finds in the landscape. In Denmark, an archaeological find was made years ago of a larger bridge, built over a river valley - the bridge over Ravning Enge, which was built in the late 900s. This bridge is the inspiration for the construction of the Harald Bridge itself. The new Viking bridge is in itself both beautiful and exciting, but it also helps to understand the processes and workflows of the past.

As mentioned, the book also contains thorough descriptions of the work that went into the dissemination of the bridge and road course - both while the construction was going on and afterwards. For example, a mobile app and a movie were developed in connection with the Viking Bridge. It is exciting to read about the planning and realisation of this digital dissemination, which was a collaboration between Kroppedal Museum and people from the film industry. The fictional story in the film and the app is based on real finds and places near the Viking Bridge, which are also described in some of the book's previous chapters. If you go for a walk in the forest and landscape around Kroppedal Museum and the Viking Village in Albertslund today, you can now use the app and get more out of the excursion. The app can be found for free on the Danish Useum app platform and the film is also used in the exhibition at the museum.

Recommendation

It is over 10 years ago that I first heard about the idea of the reconstruction of a Viking bridge over Vejle Ådal between Vikingelandsbyen and Kroppedal museum. That is why it is especially exciting to sit down with a book that is the result of those plans and dreams being carried out successfully. *Vejen til Vikingerne – broen mellem to verdener* can be recommended to anyone who has an interest in the history of the Vikings, their work with the natural environment and the interplay between nature and history.

Book information:

Road to the Vikings – Bridge between two Worlds by Linda Boye, Klaus Mejer Mynzberg and Mads Thernøe

The book costs DKK 100 (excl. P&P) and can be bought at Kroppedal museum and in

Vikingelandsbyen.

Orders can also be sent to vikingelandsbyen@albertslund.dk or bogholderi@kroppedal.dk

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