



# Travellers of the Sea

**Abstracts**

## **Artist Colonies in the Gulf of Finland: Mobility, Networks and Interart Relations**

The history of artist colonies dates back almost two hundred years, but their true heyday occurred at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries. These colonies were typically situated in picturesque rural environments, often by the sea, offering ample opportunities for painters in search of motifs for their work. In addition to painters – often regarded as the typical residents of artist colonies – these creative hubs also attracted writers and other artistic professionals.

Finnish artists and writers visited well-known European colonies such as Pont-Aven in France, St Ives in Great Britain, and Skagen in Denmark. By the end of the 19th century, however, artist colonies had also been established in Finland, most of them located by the sea. The Önningeby artist colony in the Åland Islands is the most famous, but several others existed along the shores and in the archipelago of the Gulf of Finland. Artists and writers travelled there despite the difficulties of the voyage, and as their activities and artworks became more widely known, tourists followed to experience these attractive locations firsthand.

In our presentation, we focus on the foundation, environment, resources, and activities of two lesser-known artist colonies: Tvärminne in western Uusimaa and the island of Suursaari in the middle of the Gulf of Finland. Some of the most prominent Finnish artists and writers of the period participated in these colonies, including Juhani Aho, Venny Soldan-Brofeldt, Magnus Enckell, and Werner Thomé. At the same time, there were central figures whose contributions have remained marginal in cultural history, such as Jonathan Reuter, the first summer resident in Tvärminne and author of several stories and plays featuring local villagers, and Emil Elenius, a writer who organized logistics for other artists in Suursaari and produced ethnographic stories about local fishermen and seafarers.

We discuss artist colonies as interart creative spaces characterized by constant movement: some artists and writers were casual visitors, while others returned to their favourite islands year after year. We aim to capture the special identity of an artist colony – what distinguishes it from looser gatherings of artists or from permanent artistic residences – and to explore how the impact of such colonies can be studied within art and literary history. Furthermore, we compare the approaches and works of visual artists and writers, highlighting both similarities and differences in their treatment of the local scenery and inhabitants. How does the

artistic medium influence the choice of themes, subjects, and methods employed by a writer or painter, and how did these interart communities foster the development of new ideas and innovations?

*Sakari Salokannel*

## **Travellers on Ice – Movement on the Frozen Gulf of Finland**

Sea travel has been, understandably, almost exclusively associated with ships and boats. However, there are also alternative ways to travel by sea. Arctic and some semi-arctic seas freeze during winters which has historically effectively halted vessels of all kinds but not the people's need for travel. In this presentation I will explore how people travelled on the frozen Gulf of Finland during the late 19th century and early 20th century. What were their motives? How did they manage the hazardous frozen environment? What kind of habits and strategies did they develop related to the sea ice?

I will focus my analysis on the island of Suursaari (Swedish: Högländ, Estonian: Suursaar, Russian: Gogland) which is located in the middle of the Gulf of Finland, around 40 km south of the coast of Finland and 55 km north of the coast of Estonia. In the winter of 1924, a Finnish academic Sakari Pälsi visited the island to study its life which from a continental point of view appeared highly isolated during winters. Afterwards Pälsi wrote a book about his trip, *Suomenlahden jäältä* (From the Ice of the Gulf of Finland) (1924), in which he describes in detail how the different aspects of the frozen sea were related to life of the islanders. He for example journeyed to the island with postmen from the continent, took part in a seal hunting trip and interviewed the islanders about their travels on the ice and the dangers it posed. Pälsi's writings offer unique and rich insight on how the inhabitants of Suursaari had learned to live with and even take advantage of the unstable sea ice.

In addition to Pälsi's book, I will be using newspaper and magazine articles to broaden my perspective to the entire eastern Gulf of Finland. In the most eastern parts of the Gulf winter fishing was a major source of income. It incentivised people to move far away from the coast and even live on the ice for several weeks in small portable huts known as putkas. Despite the ice, the knowledge of the sea remained essential as strong winds and warm weather could break the ice cover causing the fishermen to drift on ice floes. I will take a closer look on the risks the fishermen were ready to

take regarding the ice, how coastal communities sought to prevent those risks from realising and how they responded when accidents occurred. In addition to humans, I will also consider the role dogs and horses had in the efforts of navigating the sea ice safely.

*Tapio Bergholm*

### **Planned access to winter employment.**

Precarious position of casual and seasonal labour has been topic of labour historians and researchers of social policy. After Second World War Finnish casual dockworkers had strong negotiation position in summertime, but their work was not only casual but also seasonal, because during winter majority of Finnish ports were closed due to ice conditions of the Baltic Sea.

Social Democratic minority government appointed winter harbour workforce committee to plan, from which ports additional labour force should move to two winter harbours Hanko and Turku open all year round. This committee was established after unsuccessful dock strikes in autumn 1949 organised by Communist dominated Finnish Transport Workers Union. Social Democratic Party and government recruited strike breakers and established breakaway locals and trade union for these workers. Committee worked in bitter aftermath of this strike.

In this paper I would describe the background and working of this committee. Important aspects in the guidelines made by committee were (party)political considerations. It was a privilege for casual and seasonal Finnish dockworker to get also, winter employment. Committee chose reliable Social Democratic workers of Kotka and Hamina and bypassed less reliable and more Communist dockers of Helsinki. So, state involvement in winter harbour was not only motivated by productivity or travel cost concerns after bitter dock strikes of autumn 1949.

Co-operation between FÅA managing director, lieutenant commander Erik Stjernvall and social democratic activist, hiring hall administrator in Turku Mauno Koivisto during autumn 1948 strike in Hanko and in winter traffic workforce committee delivered for Koivisto during summer 1950 free return trip from FÅA to Rotterdam, when he was going to United Kingdom for long stay, first as volunteer at international work camp in eastern England.

This paper is based on my earlier research about history of transport workers trade unions, history of port traffic in Finland, and recent biography of the former president Mauno Koivisto.

*Katarina Mattsson, Klara Arnberg, Daniel Normark, Louice Bådholm*

### **The Baltic Sea Ferry traffic and its passengers**

Since the late 1950s, modern ferry traffic has been an integral part of the transnational exchange of people, goods, and cultural phenomena between Sweden, Åland, and Finland. With up to 8– 10 million passengers yearly before the pandemic, the ferry traffic has become an essential element in the day-to-day contacts within the Baltic Sea Region. Indeed, for the many people around its shores, taking the ferry to the other side and indulging in tax-free shopping, partying, and buffet dinners is one of the few – or perhaps the only – experiences of the Baltic Sea Region. Although ferry traffic is often exemplified as a facilitator of the great migration of Finns to Sweden, offering an emerging transnational labor market, there is limited research covering the passengers themselves. This panel presents new and ongoing research on ferry traffic in the northern Baltic Sea and its various passengers – both actual and imagined – from the post-war period to the present day. In the various presentations, we approach ferry traffic with a focus on the interaction between the business of cruising and travelling and its changing political, economic, and social environment in Finland and Sweden, as well as broader transformations in European consumer capitalism.

*Katarina Mattsson*

### **“One Big Family”: Rave cruising and the Role of Community in the Themed Cruise Experience**

Reflecting an increased fragmentation of the ferry cruise industry, thematic music cruises are today a regular feature on the Baltic Sea. Dedicated to a specific music genre, these cruises offer a festival experience in the mobile space of the cruise ferry. One of the pioneers is the Stockholm-based club Monday Bar, which has organized over 60 rave

cruises since 2002. With international DJs, cabin parties, clothing themes, light shows, and loud electronic dance music (EDM), these themed cruise events have regularly attracted over 2,000 participants from all of Sweden, as well as other countries.

Based on a qualitative online survey with over rave cruise participants, this paper demonstrates that rave cruising is associated with a strong sense of community, expressed through the recurring phrase of being “one big family.” The most devoted passengers, both male and female, have been involved from the start and are now middle-aged. In the survey, they express that the rave cruise experience is associated with strong feelings of happiness, joy and excitement, centered around the love for EDM music. The findings highlight the central role of community in the motives for attending rave cruises and the affective dimensions of the themed cruise experience.

*Klara Arberg*

### **Forecasting the Consumer of the 1990s: The Planning and Launching of Silja Serenade and Silja Symphony**

In the mid-1980s, the shipping company Silja Line embarked on an ambitious project to design two new sister ships for the Stockholm–Helsinki route between Sweden and Finland. Conceived as showcases of contemporary marketing thought, the vessels were intended to embody the emerging ideal of the autonomous, choice-driven consumer. Their most distinctive feature—a 140-meter “shopping street” extending the length of the ship—translated late twentieth-century retail and leisure logics into a maritime environment, transforming the ferry itself into a floating marketplace.

Drawing on archival materials from Silja Line and its contractors, this paper critically examines how the consumer of the 1990s was imagined, forecast, and materially constructed within this design and marketing process. It further explores how the onset of economic turbulence, including the bankruptcy of the Wärtsilä shipyard while the vessels were under construction, generated unforeseen costs and subsequently altered the market conditions in which the ships entered service. The paper in this way situates Silja Line’s project within broader transformations in European consu-

mer capitalism, highlighting how the future of consumption was not only - with varying degrees of accuracy - predicted but also both actively and inadvertently produced through design and marketing practice.

*Daniel Normark*

### **Ship wrecked: the aspirations for new ships and the bankruptcy of Slite shipping company**

The Swedish banking crisis in the fall of 1991 and onwards left a lot of companies struggling and others driven to bankruptcy. One of these was the shipping company based at Slite, Gotland, that was one of the founding companies in Viking line. The company had invested heavily on a new ship under construction in Germany, that due to the devaluation of the Swedish currency became too expensive. But why did the company put all their resources into this new ship? What were the expectations that they wanted to address by doing this (failed) investment? By studying the archive of the company, this paper intends to understand the period of expansion that ferry traffic was experiencing while they were caught in economic hardship. What were the drivers that eventually lead to the company’s downfall? What were the aspirations and projections that never became fulfilled? The story about the Slite company provides a comparative account on the competition in ferry traffic in the end of the 1980s.

*Louise Bådholm*

### **A space for motorists and truck drivers: Silja Line and Viking Line ferries, 1950s-1970s**

This paper discusses how the rise of car tourism and heavy road transport in the postwar decades transformed the ferry traffic between Sweden, Finland, and the Åland Islands into multifaceted spaces of mobility. Starting from the end of the 1950s, car ferries such as Viking Line’s m/s Viking, Silja Line’s m/s Skandia (1961), and m/s Nordia redefined traveling by accommodating several different categories of shoppers, cruisers, and motorists on board. Given the rise of heavy road transport during the 1960s and 1970s,

the ferries became a 'road over the sea', conceptualizing a growing share of 'truckers' as an increasingly bigger share of the passengers. Sharing the onboard spaces between several categories of passengers, the ferries became floating hybrid environments that have created a link between Finland and Sweden while simultaneously challenging commercial, political, and cultural rules and norms in the two countries.

*Karolina Bergman Engman:*

### **Short film(s) screening with Q & A - Ferry connection between Sweden and Estonia - reflecting upon the ferry as a heterotopia'**

Film 1: Echoes from the other Shore (Ekon från den andra stranden / Kajad teisest rannast) 17'25 min.

On a ferry between Sweden and Estonia, silhouettes of passengers are searching for a past as they travel across the Baltic Sea. Flashes of light appear as images of memory in the ferry's interior, while passengers are waiting to reach land. Left at the endless sea - you belong somewhere and nowhere.

Film 2: Nightfall over the Baltic Sea (Nattfall över Östersjön / Öö saabumine Läänemerel) 15'45 min.

On a cruise ship between Sweden and Estonia a shadow is travelling in a constructed imaginary world of glass. In a commercial murmur we find ourselves on a pilgrimage across the Baltic Sea as we travel in Estonia's history - searching in the night's dusk.

*Johannes Karhunen*

### **"Ainoa yhteys : Merimies Svante Karhusen kirjoittamien kirjeiden rakenne- ja tunneilmaisut ensimmäisen maailmansodan aikana 1914–1916"**

Kandidaatintutkielmassani tarkastelen merimies Svante Karhusen (1894–1916) kirjeitä, jotka hän lähetti kotiin palvellessaan ulkomaisilla kauppalaivoilla ensimmäisen maailmansodan aikana. Svante oli yksi lukuisista suomalaisista merimiehestä, jotka jäivät sodan syttyessä eristyksiin kotimaastaan Saksan hallitessa Itämeriä. Kirjeliikenne ei silti katkennut tänäkään aikana, vaikka siinä koettiin entistä suurempia haasteita. Svanten kohdalla nämä haasteet

lopulta katkaisivat kirjeliikenteen, sillä hän ei saanut enää viimeisenä elinvuotenaan yhteyttä perheeseensä lukuisista yrityksistään huolimatta.

Kirjeissä on rikasta tunneilmaisua ja sanatonta viestintää, joihin pureudun samalla taustoittaen ajan kirjeenvaihdon piirteitä. Pysin siis tutkielmassani vastaamaan kysymyksen siitä, miten ja miksi Svante Karhunen pyrki kirjeillään säilyttämään yhteyden läheisiinsä ja kotimaahansa. Tarkastellessani lyhyitä kirjeitä syvemmin hyödynnän lähiluvun keinoja, ja koska tunteet ovat niin näkyvä ja tuntuva osa aineistoani, olen ottanut tutkimuksessa tunnehistoriallisen näkökulman. Kirjeiden tutkimuksen metodikirjallisuus on tutkielmassani suuressa osassa, ja olen hyödyntänyt monia artikkeleita teoksesta Kirjeet ja historiantutkimus (2011), jonka ovat toimittaneet Maarit Leskelä-Kärki, Anu Lahtinen ja Kirsi Vainio-Korhonen.

Tutkimustuloksena selvisi, että niin kirjeiden rakenteella kuin sanoilla haluttiin ilmaista kaipuuta perhettä kohtaan. Kirjeisiin sisällytettiin kerrontaa eksoottisuuksista ja omista kokemuksista, kirjeliikenteen pohdintaa sekä kotimaan ikävöintiä. Kaikkea Svante ei tuonut suoraan esille kirjeissään, kuten sodan hänessä aiheuttamia tunteita tai nousuaan lämmittäjän tehtävistä matruusiksi. Vahvoja tunneilmaisuja käyttäen hän yritti saada kotiväeltään vastauksen vielä vuosi kirjeliikenteen katkeamisen jälkeen. Monet merimiehet vieraantuivat kodeistaan, mutta heistä poiketen Svante korosti usein aikomuksiaan palata takaisin kotiin niin pian kuin mahdollista. Kirjeistä löytyi ilmaisujen lisäksi tietoa sodanajan ulkomaanpostin reittiä hyödyntäneistä merimiehistä, joita ei olla aiemmassa tutkimuksessa käsitelty.

*Katariina Murtolahti*

### **Veneilymuistot merisuhteen peleinä / Boating in the archipelago - diving into the caches of archives**

How is the relationship of humans and Baltic Sea described in archive materials that talk about boating in the archipelago starting from 1930's all the way to the 21st century?

I am writing my PhD about the relationship of humans and the sea, and at this stage I present the thoughts and interpretations evoked through the material from the archives of the Maritime Museum of Rauma. Materials include audio, memoirs and logbooks from boats. I have material from the Finnish Literature Society as well. It was collected in 2020

by the John Nurminen Foundation, and it's called "Muis-tojen meri" (A sea of memories as a free translation), but there are only a few writings about boating in this material, so the main focus is on the material from Rauma.

I am interested to know, how does the sea affect people's well-being and vice versa. The sea is not always a good actor nor is a man. In my whole research I present the mixed perceptions of the relationship. In my presentation at the 2026 Travellers of the Sea conference the main focus is how the boating affects people's wellbeing, what kind of emotions are involved in boating and how do the people in boats describe the sea and what does the sea give to their lives.

*Reet Hiimäe*

### **Memories and imageries of maritime piracy in Estonian folklore**

The misdeeds of both Estonian and foreign pirates operating in Estonian waters have been documented in chronicles and court records for several hundred years, for example, Balthasar Russow describes the hijacking of ships in the 16th century in his chronicle. Estonian (mainly coastal) folk tradition also offers its diverse memories and imageries, narrating of cruel and violent coastal attacks to ships, the luring of ships onto reefs with false lights, and the collecting of goods from destroyed or sunken ships (the latter being largely considered reprehensible). Thus, this presentation examines the attitudes and stances expressed in Estonian folklore related to different types of piracy, as well as the gender aspect of respective narratives. The analysis shows that the main criterion that distinguishes permitted piracy from the unpermitted one is the degree of violence. It can also be generalized that while the majority of Estonian folk narratives depict actors who operated near their home coast, whereby sometimes the same character can appear in the role of both a pirate and a protector against pirates, there are also some descriptions of pirate expeditions that have taken place further afield (e.g. to Swedish waters).

Folklore on maritime piracy can be viewed as a platform for negotiating vernacular perceptions of moral and justice, exemplified, for instance, through narratives, according to which either the pirates' victims or the pirates themselves become haunting ghosts or are targets of a curse. As expected, mythological motifs are present, for example, in some narratives ancient pirates are depicted as a separate pagan giant race who could find Christians by smell and whose favorite prey were women. The presentation also points to

recurring folkloric motifs related to magical intervention, hidden treasures and demonized landlords, whereby besides specific individuals (such as the manor lord Otto Reinhold Ludwig von Ungern-Sternberg), also certain spots on a local micro-map (e.g. certain small islands as a hideout for pirates) often serve as narrative anchor points. Similarly, the issues related to a sense of justice, but also local identities arise in connection with the vernacular nicknames of the inhabitants of some regions of the Estonian islands, which indicate that they were associated with a tendency to plunder ships. Thus, this folklore, which mixes local historical figures, descriptions of traditional coastal life and international legend motifs, has had and sometimes still has a role in discussing the permitted and prohibited aspects of social and economic relations, as well as fair and unfair behavior.

*Toni Simanainen*

### **Olaus Magnus and the Wonders of the Northern Seas**

During the 16th century Swedish scholar and bishop Olaus Magnus (1490-1557) published two important descriptions of Northern Europe, northern map *Carta marina* (1539) and *A Description of the Northern Peoples* (*Historiae de gentibus septentrionalibus*, 1555). Purpose of these descriptions of northern customs and the wonders of the north were to demonstrate people of the Central and Southern Europe how interesting and wonderful place Northern Europe was. Topic of my dissertation is wonders (*mirabilia*) related to the sea and their representation in the Olaus Magnus' *Carta marina* and *A Description of the Northern Peoples*. However, in my dissertation I am focusing on presentations of *mirabilia* in the description of storms, sea monsters, sea animals and performing magic related to the sea. Objective of this dissertation is to examine how Olaus Magnus represented views of the classical antiquity, medieval and contemporary sources in his descriptions of northern *mirabilia* related to the seas.

The source material consists of wonders and marvels of the sea mentioned in the *Carta marina* and *A Description of the Northern People*. I am using the history of knowledge, microhistory and sympathetic magic as a research methods.

## **Fishing for herring in runo songs**

The presentation explores the possibilities of using literary works and material from folklore archives as proxy data that could be used to cast light on fish trade and fisheries history. The 'model organism' for the study is Atlantic herring, *Clupea harengus*, a species that does not naturally occur in the Baltic Sea. It only reaches the shores of the Baltic as a trade item, not as live fish. We know from historic documents that herring has been imported, sold and bought, it has even been used as a means to pay salaries.

The perception of a fish that is not seen alive, often relies on representations. In oral poetry and literature, we must take into account the fact that herring appears there not at its „face value“, but that it is represented through certain poetic filters. Often such representations need to be carefully contextualised in order to be able to interpret them in a reasonable manner.

*Hanna Hagmark and Sofia Mansnerus*

## **Cruise fever! - an exhibition about the beginning and expansion of the Åland ferry traffic.**

'Cruise Fever!' is a nostalgic family exhibition about ferry crews and leisure cruises. The exhibition offers visitors an opportunity to experience life on board the ferries of the 1970s and 1980s, when passenger traffic on the Baltic Sea was developing at a rapid pace and fundamentally changing life in Åland. Authentic artefacts and stories take the visitors behind the scenes give them a glimpse of what it was like to travel and work on the ferries at a time when everything was new and exciting, when entrepreneurial spirit and investment in passenger shipping reshaped the whole of Åland society and everyone was welcome on board. Passenger traffic was, and still is today, a central part of Åland society. In our presentation we will partly talk about the process of producing the exhibition and partly about the pivotal role the ferry traffic had - and still has on Åland society.

## **Maritime Archaeological Perspectives on the History of Pharmacies and Medicine – From Swedish Harbour Environments, 1790–1805.**

Life at sea was fraught with physical dangers and disease, and seafarers often found themselves far removed from qualified medical personnel, physicians, or apothecaries. Instead, they typically had to rely on a ship's medicine chest and the crew's lay knowledge of medical treatment. In the archives of the Swedish West India Company, apothecary receipts reveal the types of medicines that captains stocked in their shipboard pharmacies before embarking on transatlantic voyages. Receipts from apothecaries in Stockholm, Gothenburg, and Marstrand, dated between 1790 and 1805, will be compared with contemporary manuals on travel medicine chests from Sweden and Europe (Crellin 1979; Julin 1800; Sucalo et al. 2021).

Concrete traces of glass and ceramic apothecary vessels of various kinds have been uncovered during excavations of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century harbour sites in Masthugget, Gothenburg. Were additional instruments, such as tweezers, containers for liquid and dry preparations, as well as implements for mixing and grinding medicines, also present? The finds will be compared with, and interpreted in relation to, the maritime medicine chests described in the manuals and the medicinal substances listed in the receipts.

*Heidi Pitkänen*

## **Travelling precision – 18th century navigation textbooks in Sweden and circulation of knowledge**

Skills in navigation have been and are essential in all interactions across the seas. Navigation has been needed in travel, trade, exploration, and naval operations — whenever people, animals, goods, or information and knowledge had to cross waters. During the 18th century, and especially from around the middle of the century onwards, the requirements for navigators grew and became even more specialized as navigation methods developed at an increasing speed.

In the Swedish navy, navigators (*styrmän*) were the first naval profession for whom systematic training was provided and who were required to demonstrate their competence

by examination from as early as the end of the 17th century onwards. Navigation skills were also required from all navy officers. In the first half of the century, navigation was taught at the navigation school founded in the 1690s at the Karlskrona naval base, at the navigation school of Stockholm city, and under the guidance of private teachers.

The early teaching on navigation in Sweden was particularly influenced by the Dutch model. Early on, there was also a need for a Swedish-language textbook, and the first, *Navigationen eller styrmanskonsten* by admiral Werner von Rosenfeldt (1639–1710), was published in 1693. After that, new textbooks were published in Swedish in 1728 and 1756. When a new cadet school was established in Karlskrona 1756, teaching of navigation was also a particular topic of discussion.

In my presentation, I will discuss the transnational mobility of navigation textbooks used for teaching in Sweden and the influences visible in textbooks published in Swedish - and consider, what these can tell us about the circulation of knowledge related to navigation and the pedagogy related to its teaching in the 18th century.

*Marie Vatjus*

## **Medical Theory and Stories at Sea – The Influence of Maritime Experiences on 17th-Century Medical Thought**

The purpose of this presentation is to look at descriptions of medicine-related cases involving sea voyages in the writings of learned European physicians in the 17th century. I focus on the way seafaring and the sea voyage as a social and physical entity influenced the development of medical thought throughout this century. The presentation is sourced primarily on publications of well-known European 17th-century physicians that include sea-related cases as well as travel writings of European sea voyagers during the same century.

In the field of medical history, the sea is usually related to medicine in terms of specific diseases typical to the conditions on board or the spread of infectious diseases from one port to another. This presentation attempts to view maritime travel not so much through the constraints of its physical reality as through the way case histories and other relevant material was described by sailors and passengers and then later repeated by medical professionals. What kind of factors influenced the way medical stories were related? How

did this affect the conclusions drawn by learned authors?

The 16th century was a time for increased collegiality and exchange of ideas between learned physicians through a variety of channels including the written text. This meant a great increase in the ability to evaluate case histories, identify symptoms and share treatment outcomes. Towards the end of the century, yearbooks and other collections of interesting medical miscellanea helped to draw the line between the possible and the impossible, which was still a very grey area at this time. This was a challenging proposition in a time when random chance, inaccurate description and false understanding hampered the ability to ascertain reliable information.

The gulf between hearsay and personal experience was accentuated in descriptions related to sea voyages, because learned physicians rarely had personal experience of maritime travel, which could be used to contextualise and interpret information. The sea was a foreign and uncertain environment, which led to medical assessments grounded more in theoretical underpinnings than a sound grasp of the presented facts. Possible misunderstandings were often compounded by a great difference in social status between maritime workers and medical authors. Both the ability and inability to draw conclusions from these cases highlights aptly the challenges that were inherent to the construction of an observation-based medical methodology.

*Lisa Trei & Ede Tamkivi*

## **Telling untold stories: Free Winds exhibition at Vabamu Museum in Estonia highlights the incredible journeys of Baltic refugees who fled from Sweden after World War II and sailed in tiny boats across the Atlantic to freedom.**

“Free Winds” shares the history of the refugee boats that secretly escaped from Sweden between 1945 and 1951 and sailed thousands of miles to North America, South America, and South Africa.

In 1944, thousands of Baltic refugees fled to Sweden during the Great Flight (*Suur Põgenemine*) as the Red Army advanced across the region. The refugees thought they were safe but soon the Soviet Union began pressuring the Swedish government to send them back. Having survived the 1940-41 Year of Terror when Soviets imprisoned, murdered, and deported Baltic citizens, the refugees had no

illusions about what would happen if they were forced back home.

After World War II, it was difficult for refugees to emigrate from Sweden legally and even harder for them to enter the United States and Canada. Preferring to control their own fates, refugees secretly pooled their savings, bought and repaired old boats, and sailed as far away as possible from the Soviet Union. "Free Winds" tells the stories of these brave people.

An estimated 50 boats reached their destinations, but an accurate count is unknown. At least 17 vessels made it to the United States, 11 reached Canada, 7 sailed to Argentina, 2 landed in Brazil, and 3 reached South Africa.

One of the goals of "Free Winds" is to advance research by maritime historian Jūri Vendla, author of *Unustatud merereisid*, the only comprehensive account of this period. When his book was published in 2010, Mr. Vendla noted that Soviet censorship had suppressed knowledge about the voyages and further research was warranted. By making "Free Winds" available in English, Estonian, and Swedish, Vabamu seeks to add to the historical record.

Lisa Trei is a graduate student at Tallinn University. She developed "Free Winds" in partnership with Vabamu, where she served as a Fulbright Specialist in 2024.

*Tautvydas Kašiuba.*

## **Travel to Freedom: The Story of Lithuanian Navy officer Povilas Julius Labanauskas**

The paper presents the remarkable and underexplored life of Lithuanian navy officer Povilas Julius Labanauskas, with a primary focus on his daring escape from Soviet-occupied Lithuania in 1940 to the Nazi Germany. Presentation aims not only to reconstruct the biographical facts of navy officer Labanauskas's life, study and military service but also to contextualize his experiences within the broader political, military, and social history of 20th-century Lithuania and the Lithuanian diaspora.

Labanauskas's life journey reflects both a deeply personal story and the wider fate of a generation shaped by occupation, displacement, and resilience. The paper analyses Labanauskas military training and career in pre-war Lithuania, his personal relationships, and the ideological convictions

that shaped his worldview. These aspects will be framed within the larger context of the Lithuanian officer corps, whose values and sense of duty were tested during the 1940 Soviet annexation.

The central part of the presentation is dedicated to the events of July 1940, when, following the Soviet occupation of Lithuania, captain P. J. Labanauskas, along with several fellow officers, made the dangerous and daring decision to flee westward. Drawing on archival documents and published sources the paper reconstructs the planning, route, and execution of his escape to freedom by the sea in yacht from Šventoji port occupied by Soviets to Klaipėda (Memel) controlled by Nazi Germany. Attention will be given to the logistical and tactical challenges the escape group faced, their collaborative decision-making, and the risks they undertook in the face of Soviet control.

In the paper, Lithuanian navy officer Labanauskas's life abroad after escape is examined. After reaching the West in 1941, he integrated into Lithuanian émigré society, actively participating in diaspora communities and contributing to the preservation of Lithuanian history and military memory abroad. His personal and professional achievements in exile—including his support for anti-Soviet advocacy during the Cold War—reflect a continued commitment to the ideals of freedom.

By highlighting his story, the paper seeks to contribute to a broader academic interest in individual cases of naval officers' resistance, escape and survival during the times of the Soviet occupation. Povilas Labanauskas's escape offers a lens through which to understand the moral dilemmas and historical choices faced by Lithuanian officers in the 1940 after the Soviet occupation. Story about Povilas Labanauskas escape is not only one man's journey to freedom by sea, but also a powerful testimony to the enduring spirit of the generation.

## **Refugees, Rebels or Pirates? The Forcible Takeovers of Ships from Nazi German military by Estonian Evacuees**

During the World War II, at least 70,000-80,000 people fled from Estonia to the West. Approximately half of them were evacuated by the Nazi regime to Germany, as the others ended up in Sweden (most of them “illegally”, i.e. without the consent of the Reich authorities). As the departure from Estonia was mostly hidden and the majority of the archival sources are either destroyed or have been closed for a long time, the people’s memoirs have served as the major source on this topic. These memoirs show an almost unanimous picture of this great escape: people left Estonia mostly in fear of the Soviet terror, with the desired destination being the free, democratic and peaceful neighbour - the Kingdom of Sweden. If people chose Germany, they usually just did not have any other choice.

From 1943 to 1944 at least 560 seagoing vessels arrived from Estonia to Sweden with refugees. Most of them were small motor boats, but there were also approximately 70 ships. If majority of the motor boats started from small boat landings, the ships had to depart from the ports that were under German control. For them it was necessary to declare their destination as Germany while leaving the port and then change the course on the high seas. Possibly dozens of Estonian ships have saved themselves, using such a bold and risky trick to deceive the Nazi regime.

Even more special are these cases, when a ship departed from Estonia to Germany, but ended up in Sweden with armed German soldiers on board. During my research I have found at least three such cases from September 1944, which have remained largely unknown.

Sailship “Jaen Teär” left Tallinn to Germany, but arrived soon Gotland, under the pretext of running out of fuel. Allegedly at least some of the German military on board were informed and part of the plan. Cargo steamer “Raugi” departed Tallinn just before the Soviets arrived and ended up in Sandhamn (in Stockholm archipelago) instead of Germany. Some memoirs state that the forcible takeover of the ship from the German military brought some dangerous and nerve-wrecking moments. Passenger steamer “Viire” arrived Gotland from Saaremaa, going through a great storm that even claimed some victims.

These three escape stories will be analyzed, using the scarce and somewhat contradicting eyewitness accounts.

## **When Knowledge Sailed in Chains: Skilled Captivity and the Movement of Expertise in the Early Modern Mediterranean**

This paper examines how technical knowledge and skilled labour travelled across the early modern Mediterranean through coercion and captivity. From the sixteenth century onwards, corsair warfare generated a vast and shifting system of human mobility that affected sailors, merchants, passengers, and coastal inhabitants alike. Within this economy of capture, skilled individuals—shipwrights, caulkers, gunners, blacksmiths—acquired exceptional value: their expertise could be exploited, exchanged, or negotiated, turning technical knowledge into both a resource and a constraint.

Captured craftsmen were often spared the brutal labour of the galley oar but compelled to work in corsair shipyards. Their craft sustained the construction and repair of fleets and often secured them privileged yet tightly controlled conditions. This paradox of “skilled captivity” meant that expertise functioned simultaneously as protection and imprisonment: it brought better treatment and partial autonomy yet made freedom virtually unattainable.

Drawing on archival records, diplomatic correspondence, and contemporary narratives, this study foregrounds the experiences and strategies of coerced travellers, with a particular focus on shipwrights. Their trajectories reveal how technical expertise, even under duress, circulated between Christian and Muslim shores, reshaping shipbuilding practices and connecting otherwise divided maritime worlds.

By placing forced movement and knowledge transfer at the centre, the paper argues that early modern maritime connections were sustained not only by merchants, sailors, and explorers but also by the unfree—individuals whose skills and ideas travelled with them to unwilling destinations. Reframing Mediterranean mobility to include these coerced actors reveals also how maritime knowledge was produced, adapted, and transmitted through human movement under constraint, offering new insights into the entangled histories of travel, technology, and power at sea.

## The aquatic routes of dolia vessels

In the second half of the 1st century BC, an unusual and innovative ship began sailing the Mediterranean Sea, the cistern boat, also known as the dolia-ship. This was the first tanker in history, a ship built for the mass transport of wine with an unusual design and an enigmatic history. Roman tankers were constructed in such a way that their hulls were filled with oversized ceramic containers, the dolia, which functioned as permanent tanks. Since no relevant literary sources have survived, the only evidence of their existence comes from a limited number of fragmentary shipwrecks.

Cistern boats carried cargoes weighing between 45 and 50 tonnes and participated in a wellorganised system of maritime trade, which is confirmed to have connected the European coasts of the western and central Mediterranean. The port of Minturnae in southern Lazio (Italy) is considered to have been the cradle and base of the Roman tankers, where they set sail and ended each voyage. They were confirmed to have travelled from the region of Latium (central Italian peninsula) to Hispania Tarraconensis (central and eastern Iberian Peninsula) and back, transporting vin ordinaire, an inexpensive wine of moderate quality, to ports along their route. Cistern boats are believed to have ceased operation in the middle of the 3rd century AD when developments in maritime trade and the Mediterranean economy rendered them unnecessary.

Since the turn of the 21st century, the discoveries of dolia ceramic vessels at the bottom of the Adriatic Sea have sparked new discussions about their activity area. Although no cistern boat shipwreck has been found in the Adriatic Sea or further east, it is now considered plausible that dolia ships travelled at least as far as the Greek region. This is an attempt to map all the confirmed and the potential maritime routes of the Roman wine dolia freighters. This mapping is based on archaeological evidence and contemporary knowledge of ancient navigation. The objective of this study is to shed light on the maritime trade routes of one of the most important commodities in the Mediterranean world of the first millennium AD: wine.

## Sea and Polis: Making Polities in Early Iron Age and Archaic Cyclades.

This article examines how insularity and maritime mobility shaped the political and economic development of the Cyclades during the rise of the institution of the ancient Greek city-state (Polis). Recent research has shown that the city-state emerged during the 8th century BCE, following complex social processes that took place between the 12th and 8th centuries BCE. The Aegean Sea, with its complex network of islands and sea routes, played a decisive role in this transformation. Located in the center of the Aegean, the Cyclades balanced between isolation and connectivity—a dynamic that encouraged both cooperation and competition among island communities. This paper examines how maritime travel and trade contributed to the emergence, relocation, and disappearance of settlements in the archipelago. Colonization ventures throughout the Mediterranean (Andros, Paros, Naxos, Thera), the marble trade (Paros, Naxos), and small-scale commercial networks (Andros, Tenos) illustrate diverse strategies for survival and expansion. Furthermore, geographical and environmental factors are taken into account. Archaeological findings reveal that

Cycladic cities were founded in coastal locations that ensured access to sea routes and economic development, while older Early Iron Age sites in fortified positions were gradually abandoned. By tracing the continuities and discontinuities in these patterns, the study highlights how maritime travel and connectivity determined the course of island societies and the rise of the city in the Aegean. The study is part of a broader research trend that rejects the ex-nihilo emergence of the Greek Polis, but instead emphasizes local variations and long-term social processes, which are influenced by the natural environment in which each society is located.

The proposed paper is based mostly into the archaeological findings and the theory. Scarce literary sources are also taken into account (Archilochus' fragments). The paper is based on my PhD Thesis work titled "Power, Identities, Networks and the Rise of the Greek Polis: The case of the Cyclades", which is currently studied.

## **Moving matter. Dislocated objects and transformative sea experiences**

Topics related to movement are currently in vogue. Under the concept of “mobilities,” researchers are examining the spatial movement of people, from tourism to forced migration, and closely related terms such as transportation and traffic. Within this broad range of research, Material Mobility has emerged as a new focus area that raises a set of questions about how artefacts and technologies that facilitate and afford mobilities are designed, constructed, and instituted. Maritime archaeology has a rich tradition of exploring many of these objects, primarily focusing on shipwrecks, sea trades, and goods. They are moving objects – travellers of the sea – yet the focus rarely falls on the broader implications of this oceanic experience. What I intend to foreground in this talk is not the movement of artefacts between continents or shores, but rather their transition from sea to land. Drawing from examples of Baltic escape boats, seawater-drenched wreck wood, and naval mines, I aim to address the multifaceted ways in which the sea reshapes artifacts and transforms them into meaningful objects on land. I will demonstrate how these travellers of the sea carry the essence of the ocean with them, connecting us to it even when far from the shore.

*Kaori Nagai*

## **Floating Fables: Nonhuman Animals as Shipborne Travellers**

Fables and ships have more in common than we might at first think. Both have historically travelled widely, carrying nonhuman animals within them. At the same time, both are structured in ways that suppress nonhuman stories. Fables, for instance, use animal characters to convey human lessons, reducing animals’ stories to allegories of human life; this echoes the fact that ships are built to transport humans and their cargo and, accordingly, maritime history tends to elide or marginalise nonhumans. Starting with the question of whether and how to narrate ‘the life of rats on board ship’, this talk explores the stories of nonhuman seafarers as ‘fables’. By reading fictional accounts of animals at sea alongside maritime animal episodes in archival records, it offers an alternative to the familiar fable of Noah’s Ark, in which humans are placed in charge of animal cargoes, sanctioned by God to do with them as they please. Instead,

our floating fable ship emerges as a site of multispecies encounter and more-than-human sociality: nonhuman animals shape human maritime life, even as their stories are entangled with human ones. Ultimately, the talk aims to acknowledge nonhuman animals as travellers in their own right: fellow voyagers with whom we share the dangers and experiences of the sea.

*Lisette Reinvars*

## **Breathing and Butchered: Animals on Board a 14th-Century Cargo Ship**

In the spring of 2022, a wreck of a bulky medieval cargo ship, originating from the 1370s was unearthed in Tallinn, Estonia. During that period, Tallinn (or Reval as it was known in the Middle Ages) was a flourishing Hanseatic market town and served as an important intermediate and destination port to the merchant ships that exchanged goods between Eastern and Western extremities of the Baltic Sea. The numerous well-preserved artefacts and abundance of ecological material retrieved from the wreck are direct sources of information about the everyday life of the crew on board as well as the ship’s role in medieval maritime trade.

Currently, the ship, named Lootsi Wreck by archaeologists, is being preserved at the Estonian Maritime Museum, following the completion of in situ excavation. As a junior researcher at the museum, I have been involved with the wreck since its recovery and continue to conduct research on it for my dissertation project. My thesis focuses on identifying and analysing faunal remains (bones, feathers, eggshells) recovered from the wreck to provide insights into how animal products and livestock were transported, prepared, and consumed aboard medieval merchant ships, using the 14th-century Lootsi Wreck as a case study.

Where possible, I will consider other evidence of processing animals for consumption and transporting livestock (such as chemical residue analysis from cooking utensils, artefacts related to food preparation and analysis of animal excrements found on board) and try to distinguish provisional animals and animal products from the designated cargo. I compare my finds with related data from other contemporary shipwrecks from the same period and geographical context as well as with written records, mainly in the form of medieval customs’ accounts. The reconstructed consumption patterns of meat and secondary animal products will then be compared with the contemporary diets of

urban Hanseatic populations and those of the rural areas on the coast of the Baltic.

This study aims to offer new insights into the daily lives of sailors aboard a medieval cargo ship by analysing faunal remains – a source of evidence that has been unjustifiably rarely used to reconstruct diet on board during the medieval period. To date, no studies have focused specifically on the 14th century. The proposed presentation will outline the current progress of my research and discuss preliminary findings.

*Karl Hein*

### **Livestock at sea: Animal Transport and Transnational Ethics between Estonia and Finland in the Interwar Period**

In my presentation, I will discuss how concerns about animal welfare affected the maritime trade of live animals between Estonia and Finland during the interwar years, showing how moral ideas met the realities of sea transport. Animal export formed an important part of Estonia's foreign trade in the 1920s. Live animals—mostly pigs and cattle—were shipped overseas, mainly to Finland and Sweden, where livestock prices were significantly higher. It was a simple and straightforward business model: livestock were bought cheaply in Estonia, transported across the sea, and sold abroad for a considerable profit. Transport by sea was inexpensive and technically simpler than shipping processed meat, since almost any cargo vessel could be used for live animals, while transporting meat required refrigerated ships.

However, this maritime trade often resulted in severe animal suffering. Livestock awaiting departure in Tallinn harbour sometimes spent days without food, water, or shelter, exposed to rain, snow, or the scorching summer sun. Deaths from exhaustion and cold were common. The ships transporting livestock were often overloaded, with animals tightly and carelessly packed onto open decks. Sometimes the animals were crushed under their weight or washed overboard during storms.

These harsh conditions soon drew the attention of animal protection organizations in both Finland and Estonia. Finnish societies issued formal protests and demanded reforms, publishing reports and pamphlets that described the cruelty of livestock transport from Tallinn to Helsinki.

Activists also monitored ships arriving from Estonia in the Helsinki harbour and even called for a boycott of Estonian meat products. In Estonia, local animal protection societies intervened as well: the Tallinn Society for the Protection of Animals appointed an inspector to supervise harbour practices, and provincial societies in Haapsalu and Saaremaa lobbied to improve the port facilities and humane loading procedures.

The situation began to change in the late 1920s. New laws and regulations were adopted that introduced specific requirements for the treatment and transport of animals. By the 1930s, conditions on ships and in harbours had noticeably improved. These changes were the result of the work done by the Finnish and Estonian animal protection societies, but they also reflect broader societal developments – modernization, the civilizing process, and the growing ethical significance of animal welfare. In my presentation, I will examine the maritime trade of live animals through the frameworks of transnational moral history and multispecies history, showing how ethical ideas about animal welfare shaped the practices of Baltic livestock transport and contributed to broader social and moral developments in the region.

*Elina Maaniitty*

### **Cartographies of Belonging: Ecological, Biological, and Geographical Perspectives on Seafarers' Experiences**

When researching past maritime travels, we naturally tend to categorise and map them by the ports and countries visited over the course of a particular voyage. However, for sailors themselves, certain sea routes, regions, and latitudes often served as similar mileposts and waypoints, carrying their own unique characteristics. While being onboard a vessel at the sea is a singular, comprehensive experience, the sea itself is not a monolith. Currents, wind zones, and weather conditions as well as animals, such as birds, whales, and fish encountered in a certain area all formed ecological and geographical landscapes. For seafarers travelling the same routes multiple times, these could bear connotations of familiarity as much as a previously visited port might do. Such experiences are often described in sailors' memoirs, and they could evoke very strong emotions, particularly during long voyages and times of hardship.

In this presentation, I approach sailors' experiences and descriptions of feelings relating to these themes through the ideas of connection, belonging, and participation. How did encounters with certain animals bring rhythm to long voyages? In what ways did natural phenomena serve as sources of joy and consolation amidst isolation and a monotonous daily life? Conversely, when were they interpreted as warnings or ill omens? Did seafarers feel closeness and connection towards marine animals, or a sense of belonging or unity towards their surrounding conditions and landscapes? How did such experiences and feelings shape their worldviews, turning their travel and work histories into autobiographical maps and webs of memories – and how, in turn, did these worldviews relate to actual geography and marine ecosystems? Did the experiences of sailors who served on sailing ships differ from those working onboard steam vessels?

As source material, I will be using seafarers' autobiographies and memoirs, as well as letters and collections of oral history. The presentation will primarily focus on the experiences of European sailors and other regular maritime travellers of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

*Matthew Thorley*

### **The US Navy and technology: how the USS Indianapolis can be read as a cautionary tale for the reliance on new technology and the rejection of tradition**

By 1865, the United States possessed 671 ships, making it the largest navy in the world. United States Navy captains were granted almost absolute power and autonomy onboard their vessels. This autonomy was a necessity due to the logistical difficulties of both receiving and requesting orders from higher authorities while being far out at sea. By the First World War, however, traditional maritime practices had declined, and new technologies allowed commanders to interfere with their subordinate's freedom to make decisions. By the Second World War, land-based control of ships far out at sea had reached new heights. Advances in communications technology changed the role of captain's and senior officers at sea, leading to the eroding of traditional roles of seamanship in times of conflict. These changes indicated both a shift in authority and command at sea and signified the end of centuries-old naval traditions and customs relating to authority and command. This paper argues it was these changes that contributed both directly and indi-

rectly to the loss of USS Indianapolis and the greatest loss of life in the US Navy's history. The impacts did not cease with the deaths of the Indianapolis's crew, however; they continued with the court marshalling of her captain, Charles McVay III. Using the historical case of the USS Indianapolis as a starting point, the paper aims to interrogate how the ever-increasing tenuous reliance on technology by the US Navy suggests it has forgotten the lessons of Indianapolis and may leave it vulnerable in the face of a modern enemy.

*Mikko Meronen*

### **Naval officers and naval crew as travellers.**

This paper is partly related to the project on museum ships initiated by Forum Marinum; "Research and development of naval museum ships: renewing the visitor experience of the Suomen Joutsen and Corvette Karjala."

Young Finnish naval officers went abroad for training in the 1920s. They received training in specialized fields such as submarines and completed higher officer qualifications. Contacts with other countries increased with the acquisition of the training ship Suomen Joutsen the 1930s.

During the naval visits related to the voyages of Suomen Joutsen, especially officer trainees and to some extent also the crew were able to get to know the ships and bases of the navies of different countries.

As part of the training, the ship's chaplain also organized general educational trips for the crew, such as tourist visits, to museums and cultural and tourist attractions. For example, in Athens, the crew visited the Acropolis, in Naples Pompeii, and from Alexandria, the crew was transported to see the Pyramids.

In this study, my purpose is to examine what kind of educational goals the visits had and how the visits sought to promote the development of the Finnish Navy. As well as how contacts with other navies were promoted through the visits.

Officer cadets, non-commissioned officer trainees and crew members wrote diaries quite commonly during the voyages of the Suomen Joutsen. Several diaries have been preserved in the collections of Forum Marinum and The Institute of Maritime History at Åbo Akademi University. Those who participated in the sailings of the Suomen Joutsen have

also actively reminisced about the voyages afterwards. As a result, there are also quite a few personal diaries and memoirs available.

I also try to examine how these visits to foreign ports were experienced, based on the crew's diaries and memoirs. The diaries can provide indications of the realization of the training goals. The diaries also provide an insight into how cultural differences were experienced.

*Katariina Vuori*

## **The sensory world of Jaakko Haataja Haatajan Jaakon aistillinen maailma**

On sietämätöin sisustani  
sitä myllerrystä  
minkä aallot aikaansaa  
alusta heiluttaissa  
se kalpeaksi kasvot saa  
ja valkeaksi nenänpään

A fragment from Jaakko Haataja's "Merikiipiä" poem; will make a translation/get translated of the poem later.

Jaakko Haataja was born on 23 July 1846 in Oulu, in northern Finland (then part of the Grand Duchy of Finland under the Russian Empire). He trained at Oulu's maritime school in 1871–72 and obtained a helmsman's certificate in 1872, and later a mate's certificate in 1883. For many years (from ca 1858 to 1888) he worked sailing vessels, undertaking voyages of various lengths and accumulating firsthand experience of the sailor's life.

While living the sailor's life, Haataja also cultivated a talent for writing, particularly for composing lyrics, songs, and poems about the sea. After he settled back on land, he turned to collecting and writing down sailors' songs and maritime verses. Importantly, his manuscripts – notably *Merimieslauluja ja runoja* ("Sailor songs and poems") – became a valuable archive of seafaring life in Finland's coast and high seas. His collection from 1905 (later expanded in 1915) contains some 122 texts in the original Haataja collection (SKS archives). In this occasion my main focus is in the sensorial and embodied world of Jaakko Haataja as reflected through Haataja's texts.

One of his most famous contributions is the song *Laiva Toivo*, Oulu ("Ship Toivo, Oulu"), which he is credited as the

lyricist or at least as the recorder of the lyrics. The song recounts humorous and rough episodes aboard the ship *Toivo*, and became part of the Finnish maritime folk song repertoire.

Haataja's work reflects the lived experience of Finnish sailors' mundane life onboard ships in the late 19th century: the longing for far away places, the harshness of storms and seas, the camaraderie and discipline aboard ship, and the return to shore. His collections are especially important and unique – in a worldwide sense –, because they bring up the sailor's perspective instead of that of the higher ranks. By writing down these songs and poems, Haataja preserved a slice of maritime culture – seafaring life, working class experiences, descriptions of exotic places, onboard violence, and folk song traditions – at a time when industrialisation and changing technologies were starting to alter the shipping world.

Jaakko Haataja blended his life as a sailor with a creative impulse to write and collect songs and poems. Although his verses are occasionally clumsy, his work offers a rich and emotional window into the world of 19th century Finnish seafaring – its challenges, its humour, its longing for home and sea. His role as collector and recorder is perhaps his most enduring contribution: ensuring that the voices of working sailors were preserved for posterity.

*Paulina Nortowska*

## **Facing the Unruly Element: The Sea as a Travel Challenge in Early Modern Travel Literature from the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth**

This paper examines how the sea was imagined as a challenge, a danger, and a testing ground in early modern travel literature from the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth about journeys to England. Drawing on sixteenth- to eighteenth-century diaries, travel instructions, and correspondence by nobles and scholars such as Jerzy Ossoliński, the Sobieski and Jabłonowski families, Jan Weselski-Laetus, Nathan(iel) Schröder, and Karol Stanisław Radziwiłł, the study reconstructs both the cultural background shaping attitudes toward maritime travel and the narrative strategies used to describe it.

Travellers to England were compelled to cross the sea from the Continent, most often from Calais, Vlissingen, Bruges,

Brielle, or Antwerp. Early modern education in the Commonwealth emphasised the humanities and civic formation rather than maritime knowledge. The noble ideal of the landowning gentleman, the rural homo honestus who avoided the sea, reinforced an indifferent or hostile attitude toward seafaring. Within this worldview, the sea appeared as an alien and threatening element opposed to the ordered world of the countryside. Although handwritten newsletters and calendars sometimes mentioned navigation, the limited nautical vocabulary reflected the distance separating society from maritime reality.

In these narratives, the sea emerges as a space of catastrophe, illness, fear, and divine intervention. Authors developed a “complex of fear,” portraying the sea as a sphere of danger and helplessness, while the land symbolised stability and safety (*homo est animale terrestre*). At the same time, travellers noted practical details such as routes, weather, voyage duration, frequency of crossings, and types of ships (packet boats, frigates, royal yachts). Occasionally, more positive depictions appeared: the sea was valued for its speed, comfort, and lower cost compared to land routes, although river and canal travel remained safer and more familiar.

The paper argues that travellers from the Commonwealth domesticated maritime risk through three interrelated strategies. First, logistical practice through careful choice of route, convoy, and time of departure “as winds allow.” Second, religious framing, as faith and prayer organised the experience of danger and salvation within a providential worldview. Third, temporalisation, since travellers measured distance in time rather than nautical miles, creating an illusion of precision that masked navigational uncertainty. Close readings of storm episodes, such as Weselski-Lae-tus’s diary describing his 1637 diversion to Norway or the account of the Jablonowski brothers confined below deck, show how classical and baroque literary models like the storm scene, the ship as a plaything of the elements, and the sea as *locus horridus* intertwined with embodied experiences of seasickness, fatigue, prayer, and fear. By the eighteenth century, some narratives began to portray sea voyages as opportunities for leisure and self-fashioning, marking a shift from avoidance to fascination.

Combining maritime history, marine ethnology, and the history of emotions, the paper situates Commonwealth travel literature within a broader European context of studies on risk, religion, and mobility. It shows how perceptions of the sea shaped travellers’ decisions, itineraries, and mental maps of Europe, and how fear, faith, and routine transformed an unpredictable element into a familiar route.

*Felicity Ferguson*

## **Title: Connecting communities and collections through the Global Maritime Histories Project 2024-2030**

Travellers of the sea were instrumental in building up collections of material culture that they collected during their voyages and brought back to their home ports. Elements of or whole collections that captured the interests of seafarers have evolved into private or publicly managed collections that can still be seen today.

Many of the member organisations of the International Congress of Maritime Museums (ICMM) are custodians of maritime related material culture which forms the basis for their connection and engagement with community.

Since 2023 the ICMM has been in partnership with Lloyds Register Foundation delivering the six-year Global Maritime Histories: Case Studies for Change a grant program. An overview of the project and selected examples from now completed Phase One Projects will show how new funding is enabling selected member museums to grow access to collections content, knowledge and how this is influencing future decisions in a dynamic maritime world.

*Andrus Vaher*

## **THE EVOLUTION OF SILJA LINE / TALLINK: A JOURNEY TOWARD SUSTAINABLE SHIPPING**

Fleet Renewal, Environmental Initiatives, and Maritime Leadership in the Baltic Sea

Silja Line and Tallink, two prominent ferry operators in the Baltic Sea, and as of 2006 joined the forces to become Tallink Silja Line, have a rich legacy of connecting Finland, Sweden, Estonia, and beyond dating back to 1957. Over the decades of service, both companies have evolved to meet the demands of modern maritime travel, with sustainability and fleet renewal at the core of their development strategies.

Fleet Renewal: Investing in a Greener Future

A cornerstone of Silja Line and Tallink’s commitment to sustainability has been a continuous process of fleet upgrading and renewal. The companies have systematically renewed older vessels and replacing them with state-of-the-art

ships designed to minimize environmental impact. Notable examples include the introduction of prototype D.W.I systems onboard Silja Serenade and Silja Symphony (1990 and 1991 respectively) and later Catalytic Converters (KAT) on ships starting Silja Europa (1993) and Victoria I (2004) to reduce Nitrogen Oxide emissions until LNG-powered ferries, such as Megastar (2017), which operates between Tallinn and Helsinki. These vessels are equipped with advanced diesel-electric propulsion systems that reduce Greenhouse Gas emissions, Nitrogen and Sulphur Oxides, and Particulate Matter.

Fleet modernization has also meant incorporating the newest technological solutions, integrating lightweight materials, and optimized hull designs that decrease fuel consumption and subsequently emissions. Tallink Silja Line has invested in technologies allowing their ships to connect to shore power in port, minimising emissions while docked. This not only reduces air pollution in urban harbour areas but also aligns with tightening international and regional regulations.

#### Environmental Innovations and Initiatives

Beyond the vessels themselves, Tallink Silja Line has implemented comprehensive safety management system, including environmental policies step ahead of regulatory provisions. Onboard waste management ensures no discharge whatsoever to the sea. The company have championed fuel-saving operational practices, such as route optimisation, operational efficiency through optimal loading/unloading arrangements and situational awareness, to further cut Greenhouse Gas emissions.

Efforts extend to passenger engagement, from promoting responsible travel behaviours to reducing single-use plastics, generation of food waste and encouraging recycling and circular economy. Many of the company's ships feature sustainable restaurants (e.g. MSC-certified seafood), and the company participates in Baltic Sea conservation projects, collaborating with regional partners to monitor and improve marine health.

#### Industry Leadership in Sustainable Shipping

Through strategic investment, innovative technologies, and a culture of environmental responsibility, Tallink Silja Line has solidified its reputation as pioneer in sustainable passenger shipping. The journey from traditional ferry operator to forward-thinking maritime leader underscores the possibility of harmonizing economic growth with environmental stewardship.

Today, Tallink Silja Line's renewed, and efficient fleet ser-

ves as a model for the industry, demonstrating how modern shipping company can navigate the challenges of climate change, regulatory pressures, and stakeholder expectations —charting a course toward a cleaner, more sustainable future for the Baltic Sea and beyond.

*Adele Millard*

### **Uncovering the 'informal migration' of Norwegian mariners to Australia in the late 19th Century**

Australia has received the second highest number of Norwegian mariners who historically 'jumped ship', behind the US. Yet this demographic has gone largely unstudied in Australian and maritime history. Approximately 3000 Norwegian mariners (able seamen, cooks, stewards, shipwrights, engineers, and cabin boys) abandoned their posts in Australia in the 19th century. They ranged in age from 13 to 70 and included at least one woman. Among them were the father of famous Australia poet Henry Lawson; my great-great-grandfather and his brother; and the forebears of hundreds of Australians who are now trying to find out more about their Norwegian ancestry.

What began as a family history project very quickly became academic research when I could not find previous studies in Australia or Norway that answered my questions about social trends. Who were these people? Why Australia? Where and what did they come from? Where did they go? What did they do? What social and material cultural impacts did they leave behind for us to discover? While undertaking research in Australia and as a guest researcher at Norsk Maritime Museum and Stiftelsen Norsk Folkemuseum in Norway, I have begun to address these questions.

I am searching for archival records and undertaking oral history interviews in both countries to map and document the individual and collective travels and experiences of Norwegian mariners who 'informally migrated' to Australia. Just as the Australian descendants of these people have oral histories of their forebears, so too do the descendants of families that these mariners left behind. In addition to transnational social history, there is also material culture: heirlooms, remittances, shipwrecks, and architectural legacies. And after decades of separation, DNA tests and social media are facilitating reconnections (willingly and unwillingly) of families on opposite sides of the world.

## **Finnish mariners in the fluvial colonization of Congo 1890's–1920's**

From the early 1890s to the late 1920s, more than 250 Finnish mariners travelled by sea to participate in the colonisation of the Congo Free State, and later the Belgian Congo. Although they constituted a small proportion of Finnish seafarers during this period, together with other Nordic seafarers they formed the largest group of colonial agents after Belgian nationals. Nordic maritime expertise accounted for 60 to 90 per cent of the colonial crews. These individuals were central to establishing the very foundations on which the colony would be built and survived: The fluvial infrastructure for import, export, control and domination during high imperialism. The first Nordic sailors arrived as early as 1879 on expeditions that foreshadowed the establishment of the Congo Free State in 1885. These sailors were engineers, ship captains, navigators, carpenters, mechanics, turners, blacksmiths, boiler makers and riveters, working in shipyards and workshops. The presentation will reveal data and analyses that go beyond what is known from Uola's *Suomalaismasinisteja Kongossa* (1979) and Aaltola and Sivonen's *Kongon akseli. Suomalaiset ja skandinaavit kolonialismin rakentajina* (2022). This study of the Finns forms part of the preparations for a book about the role of Nordic sailors in the Congo.

Why did so many Finns choose to leave home for an uncertain and challenging life and career in the heart of Africa? The colonial authorities were not the only employers, but private concession and railway companies hired them too. They worked on the construction of railways, as well as the transport tasks required to establish connections and ports between navigable stretches of rivers. The presentation will reveal new data on numbers, recruitment patterns and employers, as well as comparisons with other seafarers from the Nordic countries and elsewhere. The presentation will include previously little-known personal colony narratives, such as those from engineer Axel Grönlund.

What were the distinctive characteristics of Finnish participation? In which areas did they stand out, and in which areas were they like the other Nordic countries? Did Finnish press coverage differ from that of the other Nordic countries? How many people died, fell ill, were sent home or dismissed from duty due to insubordination and disciplinary issues?

In addition to existing literature on Finns and others from the Nordic countries, I have explored Finnish digital databases of Swedish-language newspapers and magazines

about mariners and the colonisation of Congo. I also reviewed more than 7,500 digital personnel files. (Registres Matricules) of colonial personnel published by the State Archives of Belgium, these records cover the period from 1878 to 1914 (records from World War I and the period thereafter have not yet been digitised). Belgian newspapers have been examined to identify as many mariners as possible who departed for or arrived from Congo. Similarly, a variety of Nordic and international sources have been examined to contextualise the Finns within the broader colonial landscape.

*Romualdas Adomavičius*

## **Earliest Travellers of the Sea from Lithuania (till 1940)**

For centuries Lithuania existed as a statehood without any significant bond with the sea. Perhaps war-driven politics and manifold activities outside eastern borders were the main reasons for incompatibility towards the maritime matters. In historical perspective it is hard to trace the steps of first Lithuanians who began to travel onboard the ships across the sea for some reason.

Firstly, you must be clear who do you call Lithuanians and how you describe the statehood of Lithuania. In this paper I would like to track earliest Lithuania's sea voyagers with reference to ethnicity, social changes in communities and political developments in the southeastern Baltic Sea region. Following scarce historical materials we find "sea travellers" from Lithuania as early as 17th century. There are possible links with Northern America colonization through Jacob Kettler's (1610–1682, Duke of Courland and Semigallia) overseas actions. Also, Lithuanians can be traced in early history of New York (then New Amsterdam). More to add, in 18th-19th centuries revolutionary refugees from former Lithuania Grand Duchy's lands travelled across Atlantic Ocean and took part in political events forming independent states in alike Northern and Southern Americas.

However numerous Lithuanians contacted with the sea during the emigration era (last quarter of 19th century and first half of 20th century). Around half a million inhabitants from Lithuanian provinces in Russia empire and later from independent Lithuania searched for better life by travelling across Atlantic Ocean. On the other hand, during the interwar period professional bonds with the sea started to

emerge. Young Lithuanians entered Navy schools in different countries. Important part of their education was obligatory practices onboard sailing ships as cadets. For two or three years they travelled long distances and even took journeys around the world.

To sum up the paper should try to look deeper in historical contexts of earliest travellers of the sea from Lithuania and present the process of sea travelling through coherent narrative. Also it is important not to forget that this process, considering period in history, had different personal reasons and impact to Lithuanian maritime traditions.

*Marta Starostina*

### **Sailing into Socialism: “Intourist” Cruise Tourism in the Soviet Baltic, 1960s–1980s**

Cruise tourism in the Cold War era represents a distinctive arena where leisure, diplomacy and ideology overlapped. While scholarship has increasingly addressed Soviet tourism and its ideological dimensions, relatively little attention has been paid to maritime tourism. Cruise ships, as moving sites of encounter, served not only as vehicles of leisure but also as instruments of cultural diplomacy, controlled interaction and economic exchange. Research has concentrated on the development of Soviet inland tourist infrastructure or the ideological role of land-based “Intourist” tours. The maritime dimension, however, remains a significant gap in the historiography, despite the Baltic Sea functioning as a key frontier of East–West contact during the Cold War.

This paper examines “Intourist’s” role in developing and managing cruise tourism in the Baltic republics of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania between the 1960s and 1980s. Each summer, cruise ships brought tens of thousands of visitors to ports in Tallinn, Riga and Klaipėda. For many foreign tourists, cruises provided a relatively accessible route into the Soviet Union compared with more bureaucratically demanding overland travel. For the Soviet authorities, these voyages fulfilled dual purposes: they generated hard currency while also presenting carefully constructed images of socialist modernity, Baltic culture and Soviet internationalism.

The central question guiding this paper is how “Intourist” structured the experience of cruise tourists in the Baltic in ways that combined economic objectives with ideological messaging, and how these practices aligned with broader strategies of Soviet cultural diplomacy during the Cold War. Drawing on archival records from Lithuanian, Latvian and

Estonian state repositories, including reports from local “Intourist” offices, the research reconstructs both the logistical organisation of cruise visits and the ideological messages they sought to communicate.

Methodologically the study combines statistical analysis of passenger flows with close readings of reports, guide scripts and tourist impressions. Particular attention is paid to how port cities, medieval old towns and selected cultural sites were presented to emphasise Soviet narratives of richness, solidarity and peaceful coexistence. At the same time, politically sensitive realities such as military installations or expressions of Baltic nationalism were carefully omitted. This contrast between openness and omission illustrates the wider Soviet strategy of managing international perceptions through tightly choreographed tourist encounters.

By foregrounding the maritime dimension of “Intourist” operations, the paper helps fill a neglected space in the historiography of Soviet tourism. Scholarship has typically focused on land routes, railways and air connections, yet the sea was equally vital to cross-border mobility and symbolic interaction. Cruise tourism shaped not only how foreigners perceived the Soviet Union but also how the Soviet state projected soft power across the Baltic.

In line with the conference theme of travelling by sea, the paper situates Soviet cruise tourism within broader histories of passenger trade, cultural transfer and maritime mobility. It highlights how ships became transitional arenas of encounter between East and West, and how travel by sea mediated the circulation of ideas, images and identities across Cold War borders.

*Anssi Ahvonen, Heikki Häyhä*

### **Sailing through the iron curtain - how Finnish sailors were able to navigate the socialistic Baltic sea in the 1980s**

Before the Second World War, Finnish sailors maintained close relations with their counterparts in the Baltic States. Annual regattas such as the Revaler Woche, organized since 1905, served as an important arena for regional sailing cooperation. In 1938, fifty-seven yachts from ten different countries participated in the Revaler Woche. This vibrant maritime exchange came to an abrupt end with the outbreak of war (see Frisk Bris 1/2021).

In the aftermath of the Second World War, Finland was compelled to cede approximately twelve percent of its territory to the Soviet Union. The lost areas included significant portions of the coastline and numerous islands in the eastern Gulf of Finland. In addition, the Kremlin pressured Finland to lease the Porkkala Peninsula, located west of Helsinki, to the Soviet Union. Altogether, this leased area comprised roughly 1,000 square kilometres, and the occupation lasted from 1944 to 1956. These territorial changes represented a profound loss for the Finnish nation, both materially and symbolically. One direct consequence was the reduction of domestic sailing opportunities for Finnish sailors. The available Baltic Sea coastline diminished further following the Soviet occupation of the Baltic States and the establishment of communist regimes in Poland and East Germany.

Within the Porkkala lease area, the Soviet military enforced border control with considerable arbitrariness. Unauthorized border crossings—whether intentional or accidental—were treated harshly, and offenders could face imprisonment for several years in Soviet labour camps.

From the 1950s onwards, the Helsinki Workers' Sailing Club (HTPS) actively sought to rebuild and develop relations with the communist states surrounding the Baltic Sea. HTPS members participated in sailing competitions in the Soviet Union as part of the preparations for the 1952 Helsinki Olympic Games. Later, from the 1960s—or perhaps the 1970s—HTPS members also took part in regattas organized by the Kalev Yacht Club in Tallinn. Finnish workers' sailors thus re-established contacts not only with Soviet but also with East German sailing communities.

The sailing regatta associated with the 1980 Moscow Olympics took place in Tallinn. On that occasion, several dozen Finnish boats sailed to Tallinn to observe the competition. The flotilla included vessels representing not only clubs affiliated with the Finnish Workers' Sport Federation (TUL) but also other Finnish sailing associations, which was significant in the context of the time.

During the 1980s, a transnational peace movement began to gain momentum across Europe. Its purpose was to criticize and resist the escalating nuclear threat generated by both the Soviet Union and NATO. One manifestation of this broader peace activism was the organization of international "peace sailings" in the summers of 1988 and 1989, events that symbolically linked the maritime traditions of the Baltic region with the political aspirations of the European peace movement.

The peace sailings were made possible by the World Peace Council (WPC), an organization backed by the Communist

Party of the Soviet Union. This paper examines the peace sailings organized in 1988 and 1989, as well as the concurrent process of liberation in the Baltic Sea region during a period of profound geopolitical transformation brought about by the dissolution of the Soviet Union.

*Zigmas Vitkus*

## **Images of "Capitalist" Countries in Soviet Lithuanian Prose: Between Idealization and Ideological (Self-)Censorship**

In the late 1950s, during the Khrushchev-era thaw, trusted citizens of Soviet-occupied Lithuania were allowed to take supervised and controlled cruises along the Baltic coast, with stops in Finland, Sweden, and other Northern European countries. These journeys, though tightly regulated, gave some Lithuanians a rare chance to witness directly the economic, social, and cultural life of capitalist countries.

Upon returning, they produced travel sketches and journalistic texts. By the 1960s, Lithuanian literature began featuring short stories and novels thematizing the "overseas." The works of Ignas Pikturna, Romualdas Lankauskas, Vytautas Sirijis Gira, Mykolas Sluckis and others explored Lithuanians' relationship with the sea, its role in modern life (economic versus romantic), distinctions between self and other, "here" and "there." Overseas "capitalist" countries were often idealized as modern, orderly, culturally vibrant, and attractive, yet this idealization is shaped by ideological norms and censorship: authors avoided overly positive portrayals of life "there" or direct criticism of Soviet reality. Subtle self-censorship emerged through humour, irony, and symbolic contrasts. In the paper I will analyse these representations in Lithuanian maritime prose of the 1950s–1970s – publicist writings and novels – showing how authors negotiated a fascinated gaze at the exotic "capitalist" world with the constraints of Marxist-Leninist ideology, what were their reflections of the sea in general, and how these texts might have been read by a hypothetical reader in Soviet-occupied Lithuania.

**Panel: Ships as contact zones: Encounters, experiences and knowledge formation in transoceanic sea travels**

Abstract: Transoceanic voyages have long served as arenas for colonial encounters, shaping the movement of people, ideas, and worldviews across continents. While much scholarly attention has been paid to the destinations and outcomes of such journeys, the ship itself – often the primary site of prolonged intercultural contact – has remained a less explored space. This panel foregrounds the ship as a dynamic contact zone situated in time and space, where individuals from diverse cultural, social, and professional backgrounds were brought into close proximity during extended periods at sea.

The panel explores life onboard ships on transoceanic voyages to or from Asia. Through case studies we examine how encounters at sea contributed to the transmission, transformation, and contestation of knowledge within colonial and transimperial contexts. By centering the ship as a material and social space, the panel illuminates the complexities of maritime mobility and its role in shaping global cultural and colonial histories.

Sanjukta Das Gupta

**“Encountering the Other: Narratives of Sea Voyages from Colonial Bengal, 1870s-1930s”**

The sea voyage marked the first direct encounter of middle-class Bengali travellers from colonial India with the ‘other’. Through an analysis of selected texts, the paper highlights the nuances of the male and female gaze, their understandings of imperial rule and colonialism, and their interpretation of the East and the West.

**“Exploring Paradise: Sten Bergman’s New Guinea Journeys and Public Persona”**

This paper examines how Swedish zoologist and explorer Sten Bergman (1895–1975) used his journeys to and from New Guinea to shape his public persona. It shows how travel itself underpinned his authority as an engaging travel writer and popular educator, making mobility central to his credibility and popular impact.

Malin Gregersen

**“To Asia and beyond: experiences and encounters of two early 20th century Swedish women travellers”**

In early 20th century Swedish women Ingeborg Wikander (1882–1941) and Fia Öhman (1864–1954) both, for different reasons, went around the world alone by ship. In this paper, I explore their experiences, encounters and narrations and discuss them from an intersectional perspective.

Tuuli Jõesaar

**In the footsteps of Medieval seafarers in Tallinn  
Footwear from the Lootsi ship and the Peeter cog**

Different kinds of footwear have accompanied travellers since the beginning of humanity, protecting their feet from rough terrain and unsuitable weather conditions. Early footwear was often simple, made from woven plant material or a single piece of leather. By the 13th-14th century, when the Peetri cog and Lootsi ship fared to Estonia, more complex, many-detailed footwear was already being made by professional guild shoemakers. From both ships were unearthed several archaeological leather shoes, which have now been conserved and stored in the Estonian Maritime Museum. But what stories these shoes are telling about the people who wore these; were these shoes for trade, or were they worn by the travellers of the ships? Interpreting the wear marks and modifications made by the

wearer, one can add „human touch“ to the ship’s history. Facts are based on analysing the objects, but stories – these we interpret and put together after collecting the facts. Creating tales, we must keep in mind that we can’t interpret artefacts from a modern point of view; we have to consider the time period these objects were in use.

From the perspective of archaeological leather footwear research, archaeologists have unearthed two important shipwreck finds in Tallinn. In 2015, two medieval vessels, later named Peeter and Viljo (from the late 13th and 15th century respectively) were found in Kadriorg, and in 2022 huge medieval ship from the late 14th century, was discovered at Lootsi 8. While Viljo had not so many artefacts, cog Peeter had many interesting finds. Among the finds were also leather finds, for example almost complete mitten, a large tanned animal skin, three knife sheaths, but also 26 leather shoes and fragments of a boot. Most of these were single, but there were also some pairs. Stylistically, there were only two different styles of shoes – Schleswig-Js and Schild-J. Both styles are low-cut shoes, Schleswig-Js with a front slit and fastening around the ankle and Schild-J with side lace fastening. Analysis of these shoes revealed many interesting stories, for example, a story about a person who wished to imitate fashionable shoes and altered the shoes they wore.

From the Lootsi medieval ship, over 300 finds were discovered. Among them were over twenty different complete leather shoes, mostly single shoes, as well as one over-the-knee boot and many fragments. After recording footwear primary cutting patterns along with other important information, it was time to analyse these – it was quite a challenging task, not only because many of these shoes were modified while in use, but also since many of these were re-made by a cobbler. Comparing shoes found from Peetri cog, there was a wide variety of different shoe styles, at least five different plus one not yet known sub-style. By diving into the analysis, we can ask – what was the story behind these shoes, and why were there so many altered shoes?

The analysis of the discovered footwear revealed intriguing insights into the craftsmanship and daily lives of the people who wore it. The exploration of footwear reveals a fascinating interplay between craftsmanship, ingenuity of the cobblers and the conditions of its wearers. The modifications and cobbler alterations not only highlight the adaptability of shoes to meet individual needs but also reflect broader societal needs and challenges. Through careful analysis of wear patterns, it becomes evident that these everyday items serve as a lens into the lives of those who wear them; offering rich insights into their daily routines, perhaps even in status, and resilience. Ultimately, footwear emerges not

merely as a functional necessity but as a significant cultural artefact that encapsulates the intricate relationship between personal identity and social context.

*Matilda Jarl*

## **Feeding sailors and soldiers - Foodways on early modern naval ships in the Baltic Sea area**

Shipwrecks are a source material with great potential for studies of various historical societal issues. One such issue involves foodways - in a broad sense, food culture. The often well preserved environments and objects related to food and drink found in shipwrecks have significant potential to shed light on the living conditions onboard. Ships were to some extent comparable to larger households since they required similar functions – people needed food and drink, necessitating a kitchen for meal preparation and cooking, along with space for eating, storing utensils, provisions, and other items.

Despite the numerous well-preserved naval ships from the early modern period found in the Baltic Sea, our understanding of daily life onboard remains limited. While some research has been done concerning foodways on for example large warships and fluit ships, less is known about life on other types of ships.

One focus of the project ‘The Galley - Foodways on medieval and early modern naval and merchant ships in the Baltic Sea area’ is to investigate the living conditions onboard and how this changed over time. The theoretical approach is foodways with a particular focus on the galley (the kitchen) and other areas and artefacts related to food and drink.

Where did the crew store their food, how was it prepared, cooked and consumed? Where was the galley placed? How were the soldiers, and in some cases even their wives, fed during the large troop transports, for example during the 30-years war? and how did this affect life onboard? Which archaeological finds and other sources of information can be used to shed light on these aspects of life onboard?

## **Life at Sea: Traces of the Past from Early Modern Merchant Vessels**

Before the rise of iron-hulled ships, steam engines, and modern icebreakers, travelling by sea in the Baltic region relied entirely on the wind and weather. Wooden sailing merchant vessels were the lifeblood of trade and transport, carrying goods and people from one harbour to another. These ships were not just workplaces—they were floating homes, where sailors lived in cramped quarters and endured long, uncertain journeys.

Even under favourable conditions, a voyage from the Danish Sound Toll Station to the eastern Baltic could take up to three weeks. Life on board an early modern merchant vessel was far from comfortable. Space was limited, privacy was rare, and only the shipmaster had a cabin of his own. Yet amid the hard labour and harsh conditions, sailors found ways to make life at sea more bearable.

Maritime archaeological research—especially the study of finds from shipwrecks—offers a vivid window into this world. Shared items, such as cooking pots and utensils from the galley, speak to communal routines, while personal belongings reveal the human side of seafaring life. Seamen's chests recovered from wrecks such as Borstö 1 and Jussarö 2 have preserved intimate details: clay pipes and tobacco rolls, wine and medicine bottles and wine beakers. These objects hint at moments of rest, ritual, and even pleasure.

Some chests contained more personal effects: a book, eyeglasses, a beard knife with a polishing tool—suggesting that reading, grooming, and perhaps even gaming were part of life on board. Combs, hairbrushes, and fine shoe buckles point to a concern for appearance, especially when nearing port. For sailors lower in the hierarchy, possessions were modest—perhaps just a change of clothes, a spoon, and smoking gear—but even these items carried meaning.

To the archaeologist, these finds are more than artefacts. They are echoes of individual lives. The last person to touch these objects was the sailor himself; centuries later, a diver lifting them from the seabed becomes the next. Through these remnants, we glimpse not only how people worked and travelled by sea, but how they lived, endured, and found comfort in the small rituals of daily life aboard an early modern merchant vessel.

## **Migrant children at sea: New research perspectives**

Social scientist Aireen Grace Andal studies the nomadic lives and complex identities of Southeast Asian boat-dwelling migrant children (Andal, 2025). For centuries, Sama-Bajau families and their children have navigated the waters of the Sulu Archipelago, Borneo, and Celebes. Today, they are still known as skilled seafarers, fishermen, and maritime traders. As Andal demonstrates, young family members are exposed not only to the "world's richest biodiversity across the Coral Triangle" but also to the conflicting expectations of the modern world. In her new book *Children at Sea* (2020), Vyvyan Brendon tells the stories of eight men and women to illustrate various aspects of maritime history in the lives of children. One of these individuals is nine-year-old Ada Southwell, who arrived in Quebec, Canada, in June 1886 as part of the Child Migration Scheme, also known as the Home Children program. To us, these examples suggest that we still have much to learn about the diverse interactions between humans, seafaring and the sea (see also Tonizzi, 2015). In this review paper, we explore the intersection of three fields of research: maritime history, the history of migration and mobility, and the history of childhood and youth. An increasing number of studies now take childhood and youth as their starting point for examining maritime settings (e.g. Kjørholt et al., 2023; Cuming, 2025; see also Hagmark-Cooper 2007). We are particularly interested in studies that examine children at sea in different contexts of migration, mobility, and refugeehood (e.g., Mukherjee 2021; Arnshaw, 2021; Harrison 1997, see also Zahra 2016), especially from the late 19th century to the post-WWII era. Our goal is to present new and promising research perspectives and directions by discussing some interesting examples of latest research.

*Anne Ala-Pöllänen*

## **A Family Business as a Pioneer of Finnish Overseas Cruising: The Cruise Operations of m/s Kristina Regina, 1987–2010**

From 1987 to 2010, the Partanen family from Kotka operated the cruise company Kristina Cruises, which carried thousands of Finnish passengers across various oceans aboard the legendary m/s Kristina Regina. When acquired in 1987, the vessel was among the last steampowered passenger ships in operation, and when sold in 2010, it remained one of the few traditional cruise ships with a genuine mahogany interior. Although the steam engines were replaced

with diesel power soon after acquisition, the ship's original interior was preserved and can still be seen today in Turku, where the vessel now serves as a ship hostel under the name *s/s Bore*. Due to changes in international fire safety regulations (IMO), the ship may no longer sail in passenger service.

This presentation explores the history of Kristina Cruises within the broader context of Finnish overseas cruising. In Finland, the term cruise often refers to short leisure voyages between neighboring ports—such as Helsinki–Stockholm or Helsinki–Tallinn—operated by combined passenger and cargo vessels (*ro-pax ferries*). These cruises are typically round trips that may include a brief stay ashore or even no port call at all. However, in this presentation, overseas cruises refer specifically to dedicated cruise journeys that were not part of regular passenger routes.

Finnish cruise operations from the latter half of the 20th century to the early 21st century can be compared, on a smaller scale, to today's global cruise industry represented by companies such as Costa Cruises or Royal Caribbean Cruises—many of whose massive ships were built in Finland. The principle was the same: a cruise was a fixed-length voyage during which the ship visited various ports, allowing passengers to disembark for excursions before returning onboard. The key difference lay in scale. The world's largest cruise ship, *Star of the Seas* (completed in Finland in 2025), carries nearly 10,000 passengers and crew, whereas *m/s Kristina Regina* accommodated a maximum of 350 passengers and a crew of about 25.

During the decades when Finnish travelers had already grown accustomed to tax-free “booze cruises” to Sweden and Estonia or package holidays to southern Europe, Kristina Cruises offered a distinctly different way to travel: overseas holidays aboard a Finnish ship. Despite its modest size (4 295 GRT), *Kristina Regina* sailed the Mediterranean, the Red Sea, the Atlantic Ocean—from Cape Verde to Norway and even Greenland. The early cruises to St. Petersburg remained part of the company's itinerary until its final season.

The presentation is based on documentation conducted in 2010 aboard *m/s Kristina Regina* during its Mediterranean and St. Petersburg cruises, at a time when the ship's active career was coming to an end. Soon after, the vessel was withdrawn from professional service due to new safety regulations, and the company's overseas cruise operations ceased entirely. This effectively marked the end of the Finnish overseas cruise era, as Kristina Cruises had been the last Finnish operator offering such international voyages.

*Deike Reddig*

## **Estonia: maritime disaster as a “place of remembrance”**

The history of seafaring is also accompanied by stories of loss and tragedy. Even though seafaring today is more technically advanced than ever before, ships still fall victim to the sea's untamable forces. Maritime disasters such as the sinking of a ship represent one of the darker aspects of the human–maritime relationship. It is undeniable that such extreme events leave cultural traces, especially in societies with strong maritime connections. There seems to be something inherently fascinating about sunken or vanished ships, often sparking ongoing public interest and debate.

In my PhD project, I explore the interconnections between maritime disasters of the latter half of the 20th century and maritime memory culture. My research does not focus on reconstructing or clarifying the events themselves, but rather on the traces they leave in society and, even more, on how they shape our perception of the sea. How and why are these events remembered? In the aftermath of disasters such as the loss of a ship, it becomes apparent that they are much more than mere tragic incidents. The often-uncertain circumstances surrounding maritime disasters leave wide spaces for imagination and interpretation. In this way, maritime disasters become a canvas upon which cultural and societal issues are negotiated.

In four case studies, I examine disruptions and continuities in society's perception of the sea and maritime matters. My case studies are the loss of the German sailing vessel *PAMIR* (1957), the disappearance of the LASH carrier *MÜNCHEN* (1978), the sinking of the RoRo ferry *M/S ESTONIA* (1994), and the wreck of the cargo ship *PALLAS* (1998). A large part of my primary sources consists of press and media coverage related to each incident. Through a comparative analysis of the historical discourse, I aim to trace the cultural responses to these maritime disasters. In addition, cultural receptions in literature, film, and documentary media play a key role in my analysis. With this approach, my research connects the fields of memory studies and maritime history.

I aim to discuss how a maritime disaster can function as a “place of remembrance” within maritime memory culture. For the “Travellers of the Sea” conference paper, I intend to apply my approach to the case study of either the *PAMIR* or the *ESTONIA*. Considering the context of the conference, I would prefer the latter, as I hope to gain further insights into the perspectives of the nations directly involved.

## **Travelling News and Hidden Lives: Tracing a Female Sailor Through the Afterlife of a Shipwreck**

In September 1892, a Swedish schooner was wrecked in the Baltic Sea during a storm. Among the rescued crew was the captain's daughter, Miss Skoglund – briefly thrust into the public eye for her composure and bravery at sea. In the days that followed, news of the event circulated across newspapers in Sweden, Finland, and Norway, where headlines and stories framed her alternately as brave woman, good girl, or solely focused on the incident itself.

This paper explores how a single maritime incident, and a woman otherwise absent from formal maritime records, became temporarily visible through the transnational press. It examines how representations of gender and agency shifted across editorial, linguistic, and national contexts, and how the sea, as a space of movement, allowed lives like Miss Skoglund's to travel beyond the borders that often confined women in historical sources.

At the same time, the case illustrates the paradox of maritime mobility: while sailors cross borders in practice, their traces for historians later to find are fixed to land-based points – ports, archives, or bureaucratic procedures. The visibility of Miss Skoglund exists within this tension. She exemplifies a "hidden life" made legible only in the wake of disaster, and only briefly, through the vehicle of newsprint.

Drawing on media circulation as a historical condition, the presentation examines the fragmentary yet widespread reporting that followed the wreckage and asks how a life otherwise hidden in the historical record can be partially reconstructed through the echoes left in newsprint, and following archival searches. It reflects on the conditions under which women's maritime labour is remembered – or forgotten – and how stories at sea travel across borders into historical memory.

## **Saving Souls at the Water's Edge: Christian Missions, Sex Work, and Moral Reform in British Port Cities**

Between the mid-nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Britain's port cities were both engines of imperial trade and sites of intense moral anxiety. Seamen, transient laborers, and migrants filled the dockside streets, and the visible presence of sex workers became a potent symbol of urban vice and imperial decay. This paper examines the efforts of Christian missions to reform, convert, and regulate sex workers in major ports such as London, Liverpool, Bristol, and Hull. This includes the history of two reform homes for maritime sex workers, the Maritime Penitent Female Refuge in Whitechapel from 1829, and the missions to seamen hostel that was converted into a hostel for the "reclamation of women and girls in moral danger" from 1958.

Drawing on missionary periodicals and local newspapers, this paper explores how evangelical rhetoric around "fallen women" intersected with maritime economies, gendered labor, and imperial mobility. It argues that these missions constructed the port as both a zone of danger and opportunity—a liminal space where salvation and sin collided. Their interventions not only sought to rescue individual women but also to discipline the broader social world of sailors and dockworkers, reflecting anxieties about empire, masculinity, and national decline.

## **Beyond the Oceans: Mass Maritime Mobility and the Wider Mediterranean in the Age of Steam**

This lecture examines the development of mass maritime mobility in the Wider Mediterranean – embracing the Black Sea and the Red Sea – during the age of steam, challenging the dominant historiographical focus on transoceanic migrations. By repositioning this maritime region as a central arena of large-scale mobility, it highlights the density and diversity of expanding, intertwining flows of low-cost passengers, including migrants, pilgrims, refugees, soldiers, and workers. In doing so, it explores how such mobilities were often shaped by the interplay of private steam shipping companies, state policies, technological innovation, and international competition, presenting the Mediterra-

nean as a laboratory of new mobility practices and regimes. Finally, the lecture addresses the steamship itself as a critical unit of analysis, examining its role as a shared yet stratified social and material environment. It considers how heterogeneous passenger groups were brought together within enclosed spaces shaped by processes of commodification, spatial organisation, and varying degrees of control and coercion, ultimately redefining the experience of maritime travel in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

*Frederik Lynge Vogensen*

## **VOYAGING WOMEN THE CAPTAIN'S WIVES OF SOUTHERN DENMARK AND NORTHERN GERMANY**

In the 1800s the Captains' Wives of the Danish-German border duchy of Schleswig began taking to the sea with their husbands. Between 1820 and 1880, nearly 100 women from the region sailed aboard trading vessels on voyages lasting years.

The political, financial, and cultural mechanisms underpinning Schleswig's global trade during this period are well documented: Local shipping companies followed in the wake of initially British and later German colonial interests in a structure described by historians as participating colonialism. Playing a supporting role with regional, coastal freight, the relatively small vessels - two- to three-masted barques and schooners - travelled and traded on the coasts of America, Asia, Australia and Africa.

While the political, financial and cultural frameworks of Schleswig's maritime trade in the 19th century are well established, the role of women within this structure has remained largely unexplored. Aboard the ships, these women faced the harsh realities of seafaring, including storms, harbour epidemics, stale provisions, and encounters with foreign cultures, but how do they fit in the larger, maritime history of the area and time? My paper will address these central questions: What motivated captain's wives to embark on the long voyages? And why did this phenomenon decline by the late 19th century?

A rich corpus of sources—including numerous letters, nine diaries, and two memoirs—allows us to closely trace the lives and reflections of these voyaging women. These sources offer unique insights into women's maritime experiences, and sheds new light on our understanding of maritime

travel in general. In recent years, the Museum of Southern Jutland has conducted extensive research into the phenomenon, though most findings remain unpublished.

My paper will explore the Voyaging Women of Schleswig through their own writings, combining biographical perspectives with an analysis of the social and economic structures that enabled – and ultimately curtailed – their presence at sea. By examining the personal accounts of these women, the paper contributes to a broader understanding of maritime travel as a lived experience, expanding the scope of seafaring history beyond its traditionally male narratives.

*Teele Saar*

## **A Woman on Board... A Woman on Board? Female Passengers on Mid-19th-Century Steamships**

Modernization in the 19th century involved a variety of processes that transformed society on multiple levels. Although the new technologies affected many different fields, one of the most significant changes occurred in transportation. Steamships were introduced about two decades earlier (in the study area, by several decades) than railways; therefore, examining coastal passenger steamers helps to explain how steamships reshaped mobility and movement patterns.

This presentation is part of a broader case study focusing on two steamship lines that operated services to Tallinn and other Estonian ports. This case study will pay attention to the passengers as the users of steamships, by asking who were those people travelling on the steamships and which groups of society most passengers came from? The main source for the study is a collection of steamship passenger lists from the 1850s and 1860s, which has been used to compile a large database of approximately 30,000 passenger records. The two shipping lines were operated by companies based in Turku and Riga; therefore, the study also extends, to some extent, to those regions. The passengers' nationalities and citizenships varied: they included various ethnic groups from present-day Estonia, as well as people from neighbouring countries and other foreign regions.

In this presentation I will focus on female passengers, answering the following questions. Were there any female passengers at all? To what extent is it possible to identify female passengers, and which methods have been applied in this process? What share of the total number of passengers did they represent? Who were these female passengers, and what was their social background? In what ways

did their social background influence their destinations and reasons for travelling? Did they travel individually or accompanied by their spouse and family? In what ways were men and women segregated on board in terms of space and behaviour (e.g., cabins, dining rooms, decks)? Which moral norms and expectations were imposed by the shipping companies or passenger guides on women, but also for men, and crew members?

*Jo Stanley*

### **Yoked in double slog: women's voyages as 'worker-passengers' on liners**

'Worker-passenger' was a term somewhat used by inter-war crew on UK liners. Typically a working-passenger would be a maid or a valet travelling yoked to their employer's family, at the employer's expense. They were not employed by the shipping line. A 'worker-passenger' can be seen as part of a shadow-workforce, or as an othered and stigmatised 'sub-passenger' who nevertheless saw herself as superior to ship's hospitality staff. The 'double slog' refers to overt work the passenger has been engaged to do, plus the additional emotional labour and emotion work so often performed by women in family situations, often out of allocentrism.

The concept of 'worker-passengers' is important because it productively troubles the traditional polarised binary of seafaring worker/ passenger. It challenges the idea that for all passengers a voyage is a space-time free from required work: a rest cure where usual domestic and emotional labour demands are absent. Such thinking implicitly also encourages us to, by extension, see any passenger doing childcare or emotional labour on ship, including mothers with their own children, as 'worker-passengers'. We may also see the seafarer as relatedly hybrid: someone who seizes moments of enjoyment to the side of their work, who defiantly 'holidays back'. The difference is that the seafaring worker is primarily positioned as part of the paid 'warder' group and the passenger is a paying 'inmate' in the total institution that is the ship. (Goffman, 1961).

In this highly illustrated Powerpoint I briefly refer to pre-20th century 'worker-passengers' such as Mary Wolstonecroft's lady's maid who worked en route to Scandinavia in 1795. Mainly I explore ayahs: Asian nannies c 1850-1939 who sailed to and from 'British India' either as professional baby couriers or as the families' regular embedded nursery

maids. Sources include employers' memoirs, newspaper reports of crime, and shipping companies' interior design information

The key questions addressed are about the distinctions between working and 'passenger'. What spatial arrangements by shipping companies produced and reproduced the hybrids' statuses? What were relations with other passengers and with crew, especially when negotiating sexism and racism? What happened about allocated time off versus self-arranged marginal time out? In shipwrecks did gender trump social status?

This paper's value is that it expands maritime historiography on intersectionality. It foregrounds emotional labour and emotion work. In doing so it contributes to DEI-inspired revisionist use of archives and to Lloyd's Register Foundation Heritage Centre's initiative on Rewriting Women into Maritime History (which in 2026 will be partly focused on India).

*Eulilee Brown*

### **The limits of tradition at the edge of the world: wooden boat traditions on the Shetland Islands**

Traditional boat building in Shetland is on the brink of extinction. These skills, which have developed over hundreds of years, are embodied in a few aging craftspeople. When these craftspeople stop practising, these skills will be lost, along with centuries of associated traditions. With industrialisation, fibreglass and metal boats have nearly entirely replaced traditional wooden boats. While a few traditional wooden boats are still in use, their purpose has changed, as they are used for sport and leisure rather than travel or fishing.

This presentation considers the role of wooden boat knowledge in an age when it is no longer necessary for survival. It aims to establish how industrialisation has changed seafaring practices on Shetland, and how these changes have led to the development of a concept of 'traditional' seafaring. It then examines how traditional wooden boat-builders relate to the 'tradition' concept and how this affects their practice. The presentation draws on ethnographic data collected from fieldwork in three of Shetland's islands (Mainland, Unst, and Fair Isle) to explore the experience of traditional wooden boatbuilders and their communities.

All but one of the traditional wooden boatbuilders on Shetland today started learning the skill after the introduction of modern materials, actively deciding to take up a skill already on its way to obsolescence. The boatbuilders reported a sense of ambivalence towards the concept of tradition. They were drawn to a romantic notion of traditional seafaring, yet they were aware of the challenges of a life that required the construction of traditional wooden boats just to remain at the subsistence level. The boatbuilders were aware of these challenges more acutely than the general population, having experienced the laborious task of building a boat first hand.

Historic seafaring on Shetland was associated with risk, struggle, and loss, but the boatbuilders recognised value in these challenges. In the 21st Century, the sea is much safer, and Shetlanders tend to have a more relaxed relationship towards the sea. While this is ostensibly a positive development, the boatbuilders spoke about the sense of danger associated with a life at sea with nostalgic reverence, with one boatbuilder reciting a poem in Shetland dialect recounting the tale of an infamous shipwreck and another lamenting the loss of knowledge of the 'moder dy', an underwell in the sea that experienced fisherman could use to guide their way home.

While the extinction of traditional knowledge related to seafaring and boatbuilding was regarded as a significant loss, the boatbuilders were mostly resigned to the change, and none made efforts to pass on their endangered craft knowledge. The acceptance of change was common to all traditional boatbuilders on Shetland. The research raises wider questions about the nature of tradition and the value of safeguarding traditional skills – on sea and on land – in the 21st Century and beyond.

*Isabella Glušauskaitė*

## **“Oeslian Maritime Culture in a New Perspective”**

Saaremaa, known historically as Ösel in Swedish and German and its inhabitants as Oesilians, has been inhabited since the 7th century BCE. Archaeological, ethnographic and geographical evidence suggest that the island played a key role in the early seafaring traditions of the Baltic Sea. Following the Livonian Crusades in the 12th and 13th centuries, however, Oesilian maritime culture was suppressed and reshaped under foreign rule. As a result, academic at-

tention has often overlooked the indigenous seafaring practices of Saaremaa before the Crusades or interpreted them through later feudal and colonial frameworks.

This research revisits Oesilian maritime culture through two case studies: the Valjala stronghold and the Maasilinn shipwreck. The Valjala site, described in medieval chronicles as the mightiest fortress to fall to the Crusaders, may have originally been located near waterways, as suggested by ethnographic evidence and isostatic uplift models. The Maasilinn shipwreck, dated to the 16th century, reveals advanced shipbuilding and navigation, reflecting the island's maritime connections across the Baltic and beyond

Underwater cultural heritage is an essential but often overlooked part of the sustainable blue economy. As maritime industries expand and marine spatial planning grows more complex, maritime archaeology must adapt to new challenges—ranging from offshore development to climate impacts on submerged sites—while embracing opportunities for integration into marine planning, heritage-based tourism, and international cooperation.

By reframing Oesilian maritime heritage as a dynamic asset within today's blue economy, this presentation highlights the potential of multidisciplinary and cross-sectoral research to enhance our understanding of past seafaring cultures and to strengthen the role of maritime archaeology in sustainable ocean governance

*Reet Laos*

## **Kihnu` s stone carrier ships and stone voyages**

Kihnu is the largest island in the Gulf of Riga. The Kihnu Cultural Space was included in UNESCO's list of Masterpieces of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity in November 2003. In 2008, it was inscribed on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.

The maritime history of Kihnu Island dates back to the 14th century — throughout the ages, the men of Kihnu have been among the bravest seafarers. As they themselves say, “A Kihnu man equals a seaman.” The oldest information about ships on Kihnu Island dates from 1550. In the mid 19th century, harbours began to be built around the Baltic Sea, and large quantities of stones — plentiful around Kihnu — were needed for construction. At first, the Kihnu islanders tried to transport stones with small local boats, but these proved impractical. Closed, decked vessels were much more suitable for carrying stones. Stones were sold mainly to Pärnu, and by the end of the 19th century also to

Riga and Liepāja. The earlier small vessels were no longer suitable for longer voyages, and the most practical size turned out to be a two-masted vessel of about four fathoms. By the end of the 19th century, enough capital and knowledge had been gathered to build newer and better ships, and several skilled shipbuilders had emerged. Ships were still occasionally bought from elsewhere, but most were built locally. The craft of shipbuilding was passed down from father to son. The new ships were strong and fast — all other sailing vessels were slower than those from Kihnu.

Their main cargo was stones — stones were needed in Pärnu, Riga, Tallinn, and elsewhere for building breakwaters, harbours, and paved surfaces. Over the centuries, ships from Kihnu are estimated to have transported about 2.5 million tons of stones. Before the First World War, the distinctive Kihnu stone ship type had fully developed.

By 1915, the Kihnu fleet had reached its maximum size — 62 to 67 vessels. The First World War was disastrous for the fleet — all available ships were either requisitioned or sunk. Only 19 vessels survived, hidden by being deliberately sunk, run aground, or concealed in inaccessible places. By the late 1920s, it became increasingly difficult to find cargo, and the situation worsened during the global economic crisis of 1929–1931. In 1931, the entire Kihnu fleet lay idle at anchor around the island. Whenever possible, the ships were sold.

The most famous Kihnu shipbuilder was Enn Vahkel, who built 69 ships during his lifetime. On his 66th birthday, he completed his 66th ship — the mud barge Uku in Pärnu.

By 1940, only a handful of vessels from the Kihnu fleet remained — most were outdated or had been rebuilt as barges; only three ships were less than 10 years old. In the autumn of 1940, all motorized sailing ships were nationalized. During the following war, several ships were destroyed; nine vessels fled to Sweden with war refugees. The most famous seaman from Kihnu was Enn Uuetoa, better known as Kihnu Jönn, who sailed across all the world's oceans — despite never having attended school.

This presentation provides an overview of the shipbuilders of Kihnu Island, shipbuilding practices, stone transportation, and maritime voyages.

*Igor Michal Niewiadowski*

## **The ethos of sailing in the life and works of Stanisław Mieszkowski**

The paper analyzes the life of important Polish Counter Admiral Stanisław Mieszkowski who was one of the most important Navy officers in pre-war Poland.

He was born in 1903, he fought for Poland's independence from an early age. During the Polish-Bolshevik War in 1920, he volunteered and fought in the 22nd Infantry Regiment. Then he received education in the Second Polish Republic and abroad. In 1930 he was a graduate of the Naval Artillery School in Toulon, France (French: *École des Officiers canonniers*). In 1934, he became the head of the Weapons Department of the Artillery and Armament Service in the Polish Navy. He held high command positions on many warships for example: General Haller (Polish: *ORP General Haller*), Mazur (Polish: *ORP Mazur*) or Silesian (Polish: *ORP Ślązak*).

In addition, he made many sea voyages and he wrote a lot about the history of sailing and naval warfare.

During the September Campaign he took part in the anti-aircraft defense of the Gdynia port and Operation *Rurka* (English: *Tube*) which consisted of covering the laying of sea mines in the Bay of Gdansk. From October 1939 to January 1945 he was in German captivity in the camps *Oflag X B Nienburg*, *Oflag XVIII B Spittal* and *Oflag II C Woldenberg*. After the Second World War he decided to return to the Polish coast despite the unfavorable political situation in the country. In the years 1945–1946 he served as the commander of the port of *Kolobrzeg* (*Kolberg*). Then he became involved in the reconstruction of the Polish Navy in Gdynia and *Oksywie*. In the years 1947–1949 he was a Chief of the Naval Main Staff. He was not a communist and because of that he was ideologically inconvenient for the authorities in Warsaw. He was arrested on October 20, 1950 and brutally interrogated for next two years. He was accused in the so called *Commanders' Conspiracy* – criminal proceedings conducted between 1950–1952 against seven Polish Navy Officers. On July 21st 1952, he was sentenced to death. He died on December 16th 1952. In 1956, the Polish Supreme Military Court declared Stanisław Mieszkowski innocent.

The main aim of the work will be to analyze Stanisław Mieszkowski's articles written in the magazines *Morze* (English: *The Sea*), *Polska Zbrojna* (English: *Poland Armed*) and *Przegląd Morski* (*Maritime Review*). The speech will present Stanisław Mieszkowski's travels as well as the

most important articles on the history of sailing. The aim of the paper will be to answer the question of how Stanisław Mieszkowski understood the ethos of sailing.

*Jakub Basista*

## **The Experience of Sea Travel of Polish Early Modern Pilgrims to the Holy Land**

Ever since Polish people accepted Christianity, we assume they tried to visit various holy places in nearby and distant lands. In the Middle Ages we do have evidence of Poles undertaking long ventures indeed – we see them travelling to the Holy Land – the place of birth, life and activity of Christ. With the growth of the Ottoman Empire, in particular after the collapse of the Byzantine Empire, pilgrims to the Holy Land had to take water routes through the Mediterranean often being threatened by the troubles of voyage itself, but also Barbary pirates and many other obstacles.

We have no records and idea how many Polish and later Polish-Lithuanian pilgrims found their way to Palestine in the Middle Ages and later in the early modern era. Yet we do have evidence left by some individuals.

In my paper I would like to concentrate on experience of sea travel to the Holy Land of three prominent Polish and Lithuanian noble pilgrims: Jan Goryński (1559), Mikołaj Krzysztof Radziwiłł “Sierotka” (1582-1584), and Tomasz Stanisław Wolski (1726).

Each one had as his aim the visit of the Holy Land with sites, which were the witness of Christ’s life, miracles, death and resurrection. But getting there was a challenge which included sea travel. I will concentrate on this very fragment of their memoirs and discuss their experiences and emotions.

What more – Radziwiłł and Wolski did not limit their peregrination solely to the Holy Land, but travelled to other ports and cities on the Mediterranean sea. I will discuss their writings in this respect as well.

Thus these three travelogues and the entered there ventures and adventures, pleasant and terrifying experiences of sea travel – a fragment of their pilgrims’ experience – will be analysed.